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SERMONS
FOR EVERY SUNDAY

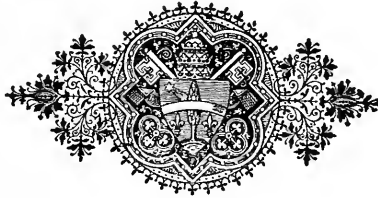
IN THE YEAR

DEDICATED

TO HIS FELLOW-STUDENTS

BY THE AUTHOR,

Rev. B. J. Raycroft, A. M.



NEW YORK & CINCINNATI.

Fr. PUSTET & Co.

1900.

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PREFACE.

In the dedication of this volume of Sermons, the Author is pleased to be able to offer a small tribute to the memory of other days. It was his good fortune to have his fellow-students for his friends ; and as time rolls down the slopes of oblivion, the friendship which he entertained for them, grows stronger and dearer. They are now scattered over the vast extent of our beloved country. Some are dead ; and surely death never summoned to the shores of eternity any mortals more generous of heart or more noble of soul. Were they living, they would welcome this feeble effort with that kind appreciation which they so often and so magnanimously bestowed upon the Author during his school days. Others are still engaged in the activities of life, winning the laurels they so well deserve. To the living and the dead the Author dedicates this his first literary effort, as a token of esteem and affection.

As to the merits and faults of these Sermons, the reader is the judge. They were written after they were delivered, with the intention of retaining the same thoughts and the same language as were employed in delivery. This is difficult to accomplish, and consequently some may be rigid and heavy. There is one for every Sunday in the year. The text is taken from the Gospel of the occurring Sunday. Since they were written at intervals, there may be a similarity of thought found in some of them, due to forgetfulness of what had been previously used. Moreover, in reviewing them,

the Author's time was broken into fragments, so that he could not preserve in his mind the train of ideas pervading them.

He wrote them for pastime and self-improvement. He does not claim any superiority for them, but hopes they may suggest deeper veins of finer composition. His experience is, that even a poor book often awakens many a sublime idea. If this volume possesses such a virtue, he will not regret that he mustered up courage to publish the following pages.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

And then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty. (St. Luke xxi.—27.)

My Dear Friends: Our holy Mother the Church endeavors to impress upon our souls, on this the first Sunday of the ecclesiastical year, that there are other affairs besides temporal concerns, which should be of great moment to us. In an admirably instructive manner, she closes the ecclesiastical year and opens the new, by solemnly inviting us to consider the last judgment; and teaching all mankind who will listen to her, that the first and last thought of our daily considerations should be on the awful subject which she presents on the last Sunday of Pentecost and the first of Advent, for our contemplation. She expresses the same wish as Almighty God does in the book of Deuteronomy: "*Oh, that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for the last end.*" (xxxii.—29.)

Since you meditated last Sunday on the last or universal judgment, it is not my purpose to-day to dwell upon that awful trial involving so much terror and so much joy; but to request you to weigh well another theme of no less importance to you. This is, indeed, the more important, for upon it depends the sorrow or the happiness of the other. Yes, the particular judg-

ment, the one which follows immediately after death, determines your position on the last day ; and on this account its importance cannot be overestimated, "*In the end of man is the disclosing of his works.*" (Eccli. xi.—29.) What were those works ? This is the appalling question which you will put to yourselves when death approaches you—when you will be balancing on the brink of eternity. What have I done ? each one will ask himself. What have I done, which I should not have done ? What have I not done, which I should have performed ? Terrible questions ! Overawing moments !

The agitated soul trembles while it attempts to turn from the past and hide itself from the future. Life is ebbing fast—every struggle, every mental torture produces more exhaustion. The poor body quivering under the mighty strain, is reluctant to part from the spirit, shudders at the thought of separation, feels the soul departing, and recoils in its unconscious efforts to delay the extinction of life. The terror-stricken spirit hesitates, but must obey the summons which bids him hence. Passing through the portals of poor human dust, he takes one last farewell of that lifeless body which was his companion during the few years of earthly life ; from a temporary existence he enters into eternity. On the threshold he pauses to take one last sad glance at the frail, dead body. They are parted. Death is there ; and after death, judgment. Jesus, who died for him, is now his Judge. The soul must answer for every thought, word, deed, and omission done in the flesh, in violation of the divine law. The damp, cold moisture of death is still on the brow of the dead ; friends still are weeping and praying around the couch of death, while the soul stands before the tribunal of

the Most High. What will be the sentence? Will a merciful Saviour be compelled, by His immutable justice, to declare the troubled soul fit only for the regions of the damned? Will He say to the soul: "I have loved you as a fond father loves his child? Here, look at the prints of these nails in the palms of My hands, and say not that I am unmerciful toward you. I have desired that you would share My glory; I created you for eternal happiness, but you have damned yourself. *Depart from me, sinful, wretched spirit—misery, endless misery is your doom!*"

Whatever may be the sentence, we know not, except that it will be in conformity with the life acted out on earth. Merits and demerits will be weighed in the scale of eternal justice; and as the balance inclines, so will be the sentence pronounced. Therefore, "*Take ye heed; watch and pray: for you know not when the time is.*" (St. Mark xiii.—33.) Happy it will be at that moment for those who fortified their souls with the armor of good works; who guarded with the shield of grace the entrance to their souls; whose ambition was heaven; whose ally was God. What joy for such when a benign Saviour welcomes them with truest friendship! When with amiable words He addresses them: "*Come, ye blessed of My Father; possess the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*" (Math. xxv.—34.) All the troubles of earth passed and a crown of eternal glory won. Immeasurable joy! Everlasting bliss!

The happy soul will especially rejoice, because it served God. Now, in heaven it is conscious; it has an unclouded vision of God; it understands better His goodness, and wonders how human creatures could offend so good a Being. Life was only a short appren-

ticeship. It had its vexations, its heartaches, its enemies ; but now these are all forgotten ; or, if remembered, they are only considered stepping-stones which led to the Kingdom of Heaven. The trials of life have been woven into bays for the Christian conqueror ; and tears shed in the bitterness of life, sparkle now in the crown of Christian virtues. Where is the Catholic who cannot strive for the same pure happiness ? He has not greater obstacles to surmount ; life is no more bitter for him, than it was for innumerable other souls who won the laurels of heavenly victory. But the highest object which any person should have in striving for Christian perfection, his highest aspiration, should be God. All else is, in a measure, selfish. A Catholic ought to rise higher than this ; he should rise to a devout contemplation of God ; and every other duty of life should be subservient to this noble ambition. This conduct will assuage many of the ills to which humanity is heir ; will effect a happy judgment and win an eternal reward.

Now, everyone of you know that you must die. You believe that immediately after death, sentence is pronounced. You believe that you will be rewarded or punished according to your works. Does it not, therefore, behoove you as intelligent beings, to act your part on earth, that you may have no reason to regret when the curtain of life drops and the veil of eternity is withdrawn ? You must live as a devout Catholic, if you desire a happy death. The uncertainty of life should dissipate all temerity. Do not be so foolish as to say to yourselves, " There is time enough." What ingratitude to God ! What folly toward yourselves ! Is this the manner you would serve God ? Do you think that God and heaven are not worthy

of all your best efforts, and these to be incessant ? A vile price you would set on your God. Cheap, indeed, you would intend to purchase heaven.

“Time enough!” Well, then, there may be sufficient of it in hell for Catholics who talk thus. You would give to God the remnant of a wasted life, of abused virtue, of an unchaste body, of a polluted soul ; but mark you, God may not accept your degraded offering. Remember, too, those things you squander are not yours. You must render an account of them. They were given you for your benefit ; you have used them for your destruction. They were blessings ; but you have converted them into curses, which you have heaped upon your own head. Yea, you have not only done this, but you have debased and corrupted others who were innocent until you taught them sin.

“There is time enough !” Beware, then, lest a merciful God grow impatient, and empty the vials of His wrath upon you. Preposterous to think that such Catholics can be saved. God will not save you without your own co-operation ; but, when you will not only not co-operate, but will persist in your wicked ways, destroying yourselves and contaminating others, your end will be miserable and your judgment replete with woe.

How can a Catholic expect that God will listen to him in his affliction, when he has so often sneeringly said, “Time enough” ? He wishes to give Almighty God a constitution shattered by sin ; he craves pardon for offenses, when he is so much of an imbecile that he cannot offend any longer. He implores mercy when he knows he never showed mercy to anyone. His sordid soul never aspired to Christian virtue, never meditated upon his duties toward his God.

His aspirations were sin ; and his meditations, the ruin of others. Covetous, selfish, uncharitable, he listened not to the wail of hunger nor the cry of distress. Now death approaches. Now there is not time enough. On his death-bed he entreats God's compassion. Yea, he who knew not pity, now turns to God. Will God receive this immoral, selfish wretch ? this person who boasted, "There was time enough" ? May not God's words written in the *Book of Proverbs* be verified : " *I will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared.*" (1-26.)

Everyone offends God more or less, but the atonement should not be delayed until old age. This period of existence will never be seen by many. No one has promised you a long life ; and even had you such a guarantee, you ought not to squander time, especially in any sort of dissipation. Time is given for noble purposes. It should be employed in doing good here, thereby meriting a blissful reward. If you desire, therefore, to die in peace with your God, live in peace with Him. If you wish your transit from this world to another to be without the horrifying distress of remorse, let your behavior be according to true Catholic principles. No doubt, all of you are desirous of a favorable judgment ; then prepare—prepare that your sentence will be light and your joy unbounded ; prepare, for you know not when the Son of Man cometh.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

What went ye out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind? (Math. xi.—7.)

By these words, my dear friends, our Divine Lord chides the persistency with which the Jews sought to oppose His teachings. They were solicitous to discover opposition against Him from some quarter. If St. John the Baptist declared against Jesus as the Messiah, it would give them a better opportunity for arousing the people against the doctrine taught by our Saviour. But Jesus, knowing their intentions, asked them: "*What went ye out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind?*" In other words, He inquired: "*Did you suppose St. John to be changeable, a wavering person, unstable, and contradictory? Did you think him a reed to be bent by every wave of popular opinion? You were mistaken, for St. John is sincere, firm, and unbending in the truth. He is greater than a prophet; 'for this is he of whom it is written: behold I send My angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.'*" (Math. xi.—10.) Mark here the wisdom of Our Lord in not addressing these words to the Jews while St. John's disciples were present, lest the former would take occasion to say that our Saviour wished to flatter St. John before his disciples; that St. John in turn might say good words

of Him. He waited until after the disciples' departure, to rebuke the Jews and eulogize St. John. That St. John was unwavering and steadfast in adhering to the right, is shown by his imprisonment. He dared reprimand Herod, though the rebuke deprived him first of liberty and subsequently of life.

Now, my Christian friends, may we not with profit apply a part of this text to some of ourselves? We admit there are many Catholics like St. John the Baptist, unfaltering in their faith and staunch in the practice of the same. It is with laudable pride we say that many Catholics are devout in the exercise of their religion, and hesitate not to profess it when duty demands them to do so. They are honorable in their deeds; they are unswayed by caviling opinion; in faith, they are massive oaks, not shaken reeds. In the affairs of life, they avoid giving scandal. They refrain from dishonesty, deception, or intrigue, lest their sins be interpreted to the belittlement of their Church. In all matters in which honor, probity, or integrity is concerned, these Catholics are as firm as these rocks upon which the surrounding hills are built. They are a beneficent example to other Catholics, while by their sanctity they elicit the admiration of all honest people.

But, alas! and it is with most profound regret we say it, there are many Catholics who resemble the reed. Their daily actions induce one to believe them insincere, and sometimes even dishonest. They are Catholics in name; but in human dignity, in great-spiritedness, the very pagan would make them blush, if indeed they have not forgotten how to manifest this effect of a wounded conscience. We shall not now enter into an investigation of their conduct—social and civil; but invite you to consider the indifference, sometimes the

disgusting manner, in which they perform their spiritual duties. You will see a Catholic come into church and attempt a genuflection before the Blessed Sacrament. The act of respect thus shown is simply a contortion,—is an insult to our Divine Lord mystically veiled in the Holy Eucharist. Why have they not the courage of their convictions? They say they are Catholics; perhaps they would be insulted, were you to call them anything else. But why not demean themselves as devout, sincere members of the Church in which they claim membership? There may be several answers given to this question; still there is one which, judging from observation, would induce you to presume these Catholics are ashamed. Ashamed? Yes; ashamed to adore their Lord in a proper, Christian manner. They think, were they to make a becoming genuflection, that some people would comment upon it because they were exhibiting too much piety. This is particularly true when they invite Protestants to their pews. Such Catholics are reeds which bend to the notions of others, or what they suppose to be their notions. They are cowardly and unreliable. I would not confide to a person anything of importance, who could be so easily swayed by the captious opinions of others. Being ashamed to comply with the teachings of the Church, they would also be inconstant in social, political, or business life. What do their Protestant friends think of them? What can they think of them? Why, were they consistent Protestants, they should say: “These Catholics are not sincere. They admit their belief in the Real Presence; but did we profess such a doctrine, we would have the consistency, not by our demeanor to mock, but with true humility to adore. They seem to be thoughtless; their genuflections appear to be

made from unconscious habit ; their hearts are not in their expressions of devotion. What do they mean ? We fear they either do not understand their religion, or they are embarrassed by our presence, and are therefore cowards to duty." In this manner would unbelievers in your religion soliloquize about the acts of faith, hope, and love, manifested by such in their style of genuflection before the Blessed Sacrament.

How often have you seen a Catholic after entering his pew, make the sign of the cross in a most ridiculous form. While he is performing this sublime act which recalls to a reflecting Catholic the passion and death of Jesus and the redemption of the human race, he stares at the people on every side of him. Examine his countenance, and you will draw the conclusion that he knows not what he is doing. His is a noble manifestation of intense devotion, a sublime expression of gratitude to God, an exalted tribute of thanksgiving to his Creator for all the blessings conferred ! He ought to be ashamed of himself : because his actions are indicative of his senseless devotion, as well as gross stupidity. What opinion can any thoughtful Protestant or Catholic form of him ? And how mortifying it is to note the conduct of this sort, when non-Catholics are in our churches. What opportunities are thus given to our Protestant friends to criticise, to ridicule, to abuse our religion. Nay, more ; how many Protestants they drive away, who would become earnest Catholics, were the deep-meaning acts of Catholic devotion done in a thoughtful, devout, and loving manner. A Catholic who so deports himself, whether a man or a woman, a child or a youth, sets a pernicious example to all, and injures himself. He may think his conduct in church smart ; but his smart-

ness is like his ignorance—very dense. It may be that he is induced to this sort of deportment by a constant menace of what some carper may say, were he to act in an edifying manner. “He is grown pious,” some one may say; “See how devout he is,” another will remark. A third will add, “With what promptness he attends Mass, and with what edification he prays.” He fears these. They are poisonous barbs of criticism, piercing his delicate sensibilities. The truth is, in all these various defects he indicates that he is a weak reed. He is not faithful to anything except to his inconsistencies and to perseverance in wrongdoing. Can any person of this calibre be trusted in the hour of need or trial? Is he a person in whom you would place unqualified confidence? Is he true to himself or to another in whose service he labors? I shall leave himself answer. Now, compare him to a courageous, uncompromising Catholic. The latter is both punctual and faithful in the performance of his religious exercises. Though strangers be present, or though he be in a strange place, he falters not in his devotion to his God. It is unnecessary to remark here that a Catholic should not assume a sanctimonious, long face, or appear peculiarly odd. A person who would thus parade his piety, would be going to the other extreme. When we speak of a devout Catholic, we mean one of well-balanced principle, not a fanatic. The former is ever unflinching in his duty, whether it pertains to himself, to another, or to God; nor does he incite adverse criticism. On the contrary, he is respected by all—Catholics, Protestants, and infidels. These know him to be reliable, sincere, and dauntless. His promise is sacred, his conduct unimpeachable, his fidelity without blemish. He is no reed blown

hither and thither by every blast of superficial opinion.

There is another point which is worthy of your consideration. It sometimes happens that Catholics and Protestants or unbelievers room together. The Catholic, when alone, always says his morning and night prayers ; but in the company of non-Catholics, he will not kneel in prayer. He is embarrassed because a Protestant or one having no religion at all is present. Is he not a weak-minded Catholic ? He imagines such an act of devotion to his God to be disagreeable to his companion or companions. His conscience tells him he should say his prayers, yet his timidity prevents him. His companions do not understand Catholic doctrine ; and therefore, will be shocked at seeing him on his knees. Here is another example of the reed. A weakling, he is without stability enough to overcome such cowardice. He is, in fact, a craven—a person without resolution and without honorable purpose. What will his Protestant comrades say of him ? They have seen other Catholics pray after rising in the morning, and before retiring to rest in the evening ; but this one does not. Why the difference ? The others they knew to be always upright, unfaltering, honorable. Of this one, they cannot say so much. If he believes in prayer, still does not comply with his convictions ; if he is a Catholic, yet ashamed of his religion,—he is a parasite without determination and without dignity.

These cringing Catholics are never admired. They are ever regarded by prudent men, as insincere, cowardly, and unreliable. These Catholics would, were a favorable opportunity to offer itself, stoop to the meanest undertakings, in order to achieve their end. Did religion intervene between themselves and office

or distinction or wealth, they would spurn everything sacred, rather than loose the glittering bauble. Were their own advancement thereby enhanced, they would not hesitate to violate honor, pledge, confidence, and even religion. But their ambition is worthless. It has not the requisites for success. Such may prosper for a time ; but when about to clutch the longed-for prize, Almighty God stretches forth His all-powerful Arm, and they recoil, dismayed, defeated, and debased.

Let us learn a lesson from the text. Let us, with indefatigable energy and application, strive to be true Catholics. " Then it follows, as night the day, that we cannot do wrong to anyone." If we have been derelict in duty ; if our conduct has been censurable ; let us now, during this holy season of advent, cast down our follies and defects, and put on the spirit of righteousness, so that we may not be supine reeds, but worthy on Christmas morning, with genuine Christian devotion, to welcome with joy and thanksgiving the sublime feast of Christ's birth.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. (St. John i.—23.)

On last Sunday, my dear friends, you heard our Divine Lord's eulogy of St. John the Baptist. To-day you learn from the same source, St. John's opinion of himself. In last Sunday's Gospel Jesus said that St. John the Baptist was greater than a prophet—that he was an angel: "*For I shall send My angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way for thee.*" St. John, in the humility of his heart, tells us he is not worthy to loosen the latchet of his Divine Master's shoe; that he is simply the voice of one crying in the wilderness—preparing the people for the sublime doctrine of the Son of God. He baptized unto repentance. He labored to arouse his hearers to a compunction for their sins. In the earnestness of his appeals, he hopes to bring the Jews to a sense of their duties, and to impress upon them the horror of their transgressions. In their midst stood, however, One Who would give to mankind a baptism, a sacrament, which would have the mysterious efficacy of purifying from sin. It is for Him St. John is preparing the way. His voice cries aloud in the wilderness for the Jews to listen, be converted, and welcome the dawn of Christianity.

Now, may we not, with propriety, apply this text to every priest in every church throughout Christendom? On this third Sunday of Advent the Catholic Church everywhere exhorts her peoples to hearken to her voice. Her clergy, in every land, implore their congregations to prepare for the sublime feast of Christmas, by receiving worthily the sacraments; she entreats them to welcome with pure hearts and innocent purposes the anniversary of their Saviour's birth. The priest is the voice of the Church—the voice of one crying in the wilderness. And what a wilderness it is! The wilderness of sin and corruption! The vices of men have shot deep roots into the soul. It is with difficulty they are uprooted. Sometimes it requires almost a miracle of God's mercy to withdraw persons from the mire and poison of sin. This is the wilderness choking every pure emotion of the heart, and obscuring with darkness the lofty operations of the intellect; this is the wilderness which brings pallor to the cheek, dimness to the eye, filth to the tongue, and feebleness to the soul.

We are, nevertheless, told that a priest must be cautious in speaking of the sins of society; that he should express himself with the nicest discernment; in fact, that he must remain silent while his flock is running headlong to perdition—lest perchance he offend the delicate sensibilities of one whose soul is tarnished by the foul fumes of impurity or drunkenness. Some may be so imprudent as to say he learned this knowledge through a source which forbids him to speak with vehemence and lucidity. Well, my dear friends, it is only when a priest is outside his own parish, that he learns the truth of the saying, "If you want to hear what is going on at home, go away from home." On trains,

and in other towns, a priest finds out more about his own people than he could ever discover at home. He hears with regret of licentiousness in his own parish ; and is pained to learn of the disgraceful conduct of others who have left their Father's house. They do not salute a priest now. They have outlived this custom, this token of respect. Such would not do now. Their associations are changed. Comments would be made. They would rather not be considered Catholics. The truth is, an honorable Catholic would be ashamed of them ; and a priest, knowing the infernal lives they are leading, could not venture to recognize them. They have assumed more style in dress and gait. They are changed ; but, alas ! what a deplorable change ! From under the old roof, they went forth with modesty upon their cheek and honor upon their brow. Life was young, hope was ardent, and ambition was unsullied. In the brief period of a year, what a sad transformation of character ! The heart is no longer pure—filial affection is destroyed ; and could you read the conscience, you would discover heinous sins branded thereon. They imagine that society is generally ignorant of their guilt ; but ere long the veil will be torn aside, and they will stand degraded. In their fall, even shame will blush at their crimes, while their family will be dishonored and disgraced. Should they never be unveiled, ought they not have some honor, some decency ? Natural morality, it seems, would be sufficient to restrain them somewhat from their precipitous indulgence in sin. The pagan would hesitate to tarnish his soul with the excesses of which some Catholics boast. But, no ; early training, lessons of virtue, attachment to home and friends, the rebukes of innocence, the appeals of virtue—all are inadequate

to calm the passions or sober the senses ! Yea ; and Catholics will allow themselves to be decoyed into the meshes of impurity by Protestants or by those having no faith at all. They are sought out by those classes, and fall victims to flattery, affable manners, and gentle ways ! Fie upon such Catholics ! Where is there manhood or womanhood ? Do they not understand that in their absence these ruffians speak of their softness, while they extol their own conquests ? Poor, deluded Catholics ! Slaves to your enemies ! You are Catholics, and this is the virtue of Catholic girls and Catholic young men ? Oh ; you can go to confession again, and have all your sins forgiven. Ah, ah, ah, how soft ! Did you hear the sport made of you, human indignation would assert itself, and you would awaken before it is too late. Were this double life never disclosed, there would be, in the end, little consolation in the concealment. There is truth in the words of the poet :

“ I waive the quantum o’ the sin,
 The hazard o’ concealing ;
 But, och ! it hardens a within,
 And petrifies the feeling.”—*Burns*.

The fine emotions of the heart, the delicate sensibilities, are banished from their native home, while the fog of dissipation settles upon the intellect, rendering it unfit for the grand achievements for which it was created.

When away from one’s parish, he hears of the disorders going on there. The youth are engaged in questionable enjoyments—some of them sinful. He is grieved at what he learns ; but must he remain silent while the devil is devouring the flock entrusted to his care ? Amidst this wilderness, is he not to raise his

voice ; and with entreaty and rebuke, exhortation and reprimand, drive back the contagion of sin ? He is not ? Then he had better cast off his sacred robes and cease to be the shepherd of his people. No ; a priest must be fearless. He must do his duty, though attacked by criticism as unfair as it is injudicious. His revilers will live to praise him for his unflinching efforts, or lament they did not obey his advice.

Young people should have definite principles of conduct. They ought to train themselves to walk in the path of virtue ; never to swerve from it. Honesty, chastity, and sobriety must constitute their motto, if they will succeed in life. Catholics are respected by many Protestants ; but if they abuse the confidence placed in them, they bring disgrace upon themselves and injury upon others. Their Church is judged, too, from their actions ; yet there is not enough of Christian character in some Catholics to love their Church, or to honor themselves by a spotless life. A young man or a young woman ought to conduct himself or herself, at home and abroad, with a decorum at once simple, honest, and honorable. When you go away from home, resolve that, though it be twenty years before you again cross the threshold of your father's house, your return will bring no scandal to your friends, nor any embarrassment to your parents' declining old age. Be determined—keep your resolution ; then the grace of God will abound in you. Temptations will come, but virtue will be the result of temptations. Trials will test you ; yet out of the struggle you will come forth fortified with new vigor and rewarded with the consciousness of your success. What is a grander example of fortitude than to see a young Catholic battling with sin, surrounded by the enemies of honor,

but still wearing the bays of victory? As he or she appears to you, so is the soul. Neither leads a double life. In every avenue of action you may recognize them, and not bring disgrace upon yourselves by the recognition. In every position of trust or distinction, fidelity to upright principle is the guardian angel who directs their steps and points them to success. Lecherous sins do not emaciate their bodies or rob their intellects of brilliancy or power.

There are other sins in the wilderness to which we have metaphorically referred, and against which a pastor of souls must time and again raise his voice. Of these, we shall mention no more at this time; yet we earnestly entreat you to prepare for the great feast of Christmas. If some of you, during the year, have entered this wilderness, where nothing abounds but sin, awaken to a knowledge of your weakness and your peril—beg God to give you the grace of repentance. With the tenderness of a most affectionate father, He extends His arms to you; He offers you His blessings—the blessings of peace, the blessings of a pure heart, the blessings of a glorious Christmas! Can you refuse? Can you deny His appeal as He points to the Crib at Bethlehem and directs your eyes to the Cross on Calvary? He knows your frailties; He understands the delusive influence of the tempter; He is not ignorant of your most secret sins; still He asks you to return, and He will pardon all.

Now, my dear friends, let you listen to His benign invitation; let you repent; let you confess your sins,—then God will bless you, and Christmas morning will be a happy one for you all. Your pious example will be an encouragement to many to return from the wilderness of sin into which they have strayed. You will be,

by your Catholic piety, stars directing others to Jesus in the crib, in the tabernacle upon our altar. You will be messengers of peace to them, wiping away sadness from their countenance and remorse from their hearts. Ah ! you will be leading them to the fountain of grace, while you will be enriching yourselves with the approbations of heaven. Then your hearts will be joyful, and you will be capable of joining your voices to those of the angels, and with an immaculate soul sing *Gloria in Excelsis Deo !*

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. (St. Luke iii.—5.)

My Dear Friends : As the inspired writer teaches us, the word of God came to St. John the Baptist in the desert. Almighty God commanded him to preach and baptize. He was to exhort the people to penance, that they might be worthy of the sublime teachings of Jesus, who was about to employ the last three years of His terrestrial life in promulgating a higher civilization, and a more perfect religion than the world had known. The mission of St. John was to fill up the valleys caused by sin ; to bring low the mountains and hills of crime ; to make the crookedness of the heart straight, by driving therefrom deceptions and deceits ; to smooth the path of man's life by destroying the roughness of man's excesses. He was chosen by omnipotence for this purpose. By entreaties and admonitions, he was to arouse the people from their sinful lethargy and awaken in them a new life—a life of love and union with their Redeemer. A new order of things is to be instituted, a new Church established ; and in order that the dawn of a nobler civilization may be welcomed, the people by their penance must render themselves acceptable. To dispose the people for the

Gospel to be preached by our Saviour, was the mission entrusted to St. John. By doing penance, he set the example ; and by the exercise of penance, the people were to become children of the New Dispensation.

During these weeks of Advent, my dear friends, you have been, in compliance with the will of the Church, performing works of penance ; you have been preparing yourselves for the great feast of Christmas. Many of you have been a source of much edification. You have mortified yourselves according to the rules laid down by our holy Mother the Church ; and to add to this exemplary conduct, you have nourished your souls with the food of life—the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. I am pleased to be able to congratulate you, and am proud of the fact that so many have, by their devotion, exhibited such grand appreciation for the anniversary of the Redeemer's birth. You have made the crooked ways straight, and the rough ways plain, for the worthy celebration of the sacred feast. You have banished sin from your souls, have knelt in thought before the Infant of Bethlehem, and crowned the year's labor by receiving Him into your hearts.

But, oh, how many Catholics there are whose only ambition is to be drunk on Christmas ! The overmastering thought of their souls is to have a good time, as they term it—a good time which only brings desolation to their homes, reproach upon their Church, curses upon themselves. A good time ! Is drunkenness and contentions and murder, what you call a good time ? To see your children sorrowful and your wife in tears ; to see your sister ashamed of you and your mother's heart breaking on account of your behavior ;

to see these terrible things on the magnificent feast of the New-born King, do you call good? Instead of preparing for Christmas in a truly Christian manner; instead of planning to bring joy to their homes, such Catholics are meditating how they can, by their disorders, cause sorrow and gloom to settle upon their families on this glorious day of peace to men of good will. Will these attend Mass on that day? will they go to church, and with innocence of heart adore the Infant born for their salvation? No; their minds are bent upon a different celebration—a celebration fraught with degradation to themselves and miseries for others. To the mountains of sin and crime already recorded in their souls, they long to heap others. Upon the rugged ways of their life they desire to strew thorns by neglecting themselves and their families. In what marked contrast is their behavior with that of those whose preparation is edifying and commendable. With pure intentions, with unsullied conscience, the latter hear the pealing of the Christmas bells calling worshippers to the adorable sacrifice of the Mass, while the former are reveling in debauchery.

It is, indeed, laudable for Catholics to receive the sacraments at this time of the year. In this manner they are making earnest efforts to sanctify themselves, in order that they may be suitable to join their voices with those of the angels, and praise the Son of God for all His favors. At this time, moreover, the old year is rapidly expiring. Since its birth, numerous are the sins committed by every Catholic against his God. In the soul, mountains and hills of sin have arisen. Valleys have been cut therein by the departure of God's grace, leaving chasms where once God's grace abounded. Deceptions have made the ways of the heart crooked.

Others have been injured by us ; but the injuries thus perpetrated have made our paths rough and thorny. Now is a commendable opportunity to return once more to the Saviour of humanity. The Babe of the City of David has given ample means to us for the accomplishment of all that St. John the Baptist so ardently desired to effect. Our Lord in His love for fallen man instituted the sacraments. Among them is one for the remission of actual sin ; in another, He gave Himself to us to be our strength and consolation. In the Sacrament of Penance is achieved effectually what St. John labored to execute. Here, truly, every valley is filled, every mountain brought low, the crooked made straight, and the rough ways plain. Here sin is banished from the soul. The mountains of vice and corruption, the mighty barriers to God's grace, are demolished. The valleys of the heart are filled with the benedictions of heaven. The crooked made straight by our sorrow and restitution. The rough ways, the ways which we have trod, which we made rough, on which we were tortured on account of our own follies, these all are now plain. The absolution of the priest falling upon a contrite penitent, has expelled the enormities of the soul ; God's peace reigns therein. Mountains and hills and valleys have disappeared. A disturbed heart finds rest and solace in the mercies of its God. A sinner rejoices in the goodness of heaven. An enemy of God is now overjoyed in the contemplation of the feast to be celebrated in a few days. In the depths of a grateful heart he longs to commemorate the birth of Him Who loves mankind with an imperishable steadfastness. Christmas brings him joy, to which he was long a stranger, and the Child Jesus was not born in vain.

But, ah ! ponder well in your hearts the astonishing favor bestowed upon those who, at this solemn season of the year, receive in Holy Communion that same Infant who was born in Bethlehem. In commemoration of the birth, a Catholic has the inexpressible delight of being the recipient of the Saviour of the world. Oh, what an inestimable favor ! Oh, what an extraordinary mystery ! How inexplicably kind the ways of God ! St. Joseph was blessed in being His foster-father ; the shepherds and wise men were honored by the audience they obtained ; but Catholics may welcome Him into their hearts.

Will you who have not yet perfected your souls for the approaching feast, allow this holy season to pass without availing yourselves of this wonderful opportunity offered to you ? Can you suffer Christmas to come and go without you receiving the Sacraments ? Do you intend to mar the feast by your unrestrained indulgences ? If you do, you are not consistent Catholics. You disrespect the favors offered you by Almighty God. You will heap dishonor upon yourselves, and wrong your families ; you will reject the blessing of the Babe in the manger, and fling insults at Him and at heaven. The feast proclaims the redemption of mankind ; the Church unites with the angels in singing : “ *Glory to God in the highest, peace to men of good will.* ” Shall we refuse to join our voices to the acclamations of praise and thanksgiving expressed by every good Catholic ? Shall we be so ungrateful as to forget the sacrifices made for us ; to ignore all the sacred remembrances collected around the Crib of Bethlehem ? Nay, we shall not be such base ingrates ; but shall foster a veneration for the day, which will be meritorious for ourselves, gratifying to our holy

Church, edifying to others, and pleasing to our Divine Saviour.

In order to accomplish these truly Christian works, prepare yourselves by the worthy reception of the sacraments. In the practise of this devotion, others will imitate you. They shall be induced to follow your Catholic example. You shall be as angels, conducting them to the New-born King. In the tranquillity of a stainless soul, they shall kneel, and together with you, worship the Child Jesus. Do not hesitate, nor postpone the realization of so great blessings. Christmas is a time of holiest inspiration. The day suggests so many fond recollections; Our Lord invites us to partake of its true joys. Let us make the feast one of happiness for ourselves, and peace and good will to others. By celebrating the day in a Catholic manner, then you will not bring ruin and sorrow upon yourselves. Christmas will then, indeed, be merry, and in the merriment there will be no bitter alloy. The day after will not be one of remorse, or regretful recollections. On the contrary, you will thank God for the abundance of His graces which assisted you to pass the feast in the enjoyment of innocent amusements and the performance of ennobling virtue.

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

Behold this Child is set for the ruin of many. (St. Luke ii.—34.)

My Dear Friends : This awful truth at first, prostrates the powers of the soul and fills it with bewilderment. Astonishing, is it not, that Jesus who died for the human race, should be the ruin of many ? His mission was, you think, to elevate, to civilize man, to point him to higher ideals ; but we learn from the Gospel of to-day, that He is set for the destruction of many. Holy Simeon said to Mary, His Mother : “ *Behold this Child is set for the ruin and resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted.*” In one prophetic vision this holy man saw the future. He discerned how many would abuse the love which Jesus entertained for them ; and of which he gave proofs upon the cross. He distinguished the countless myriads who would revile that divine Person ; who would blaspheme His holy name ; who would deny Him, and even persecute those who followed His sacred standard. Overpowered at the sight of so much wickedness and so great ingratitude, this venerable man exclaimed : “ *Behold this Child is set for the ruin of many.*” Ruin, indeed ; but ruin effected by their own lawlessness, by their own tyranny, by their own corrup-

tion ! Ruin ! Complete ruin ! consummated in opposition to God's will and caused by their own unyielding perversity. It is not our Divine Lord's will that any sinner should perish ; but that he may be converted and live. If we destroy our own happiness here, if we render ourselves reprobates hereafter, if we exclude God's graces from our souls, the disastrous consequences are our own making, and cannot be attributed to our divine Redeemer. If damned at all, it will be in spite of God's mercies, and in accordance with our persistent wickedness.

The pages of history stamp the seal of verification upon the prediction of Blessed Simeon. Scarcely had the happy angelical voices ceased their notes of praise ; hardly had the wise men finished their acts of adoration, than Herod provoked the maledictions of heaven upon his head by his infamous edict of destruction. Wishing, as you know, to murder the Infant Jesus, he commanded that all the male children of two years and under, should be slaughtered. Horrible crime ! Wretched king to pollute your soul and brand your own memory by such a ferocious act of cruelty ! Your base infamy will not be forgotten. You will ever be associated with those perfidious demons of history, who have been a curse to civilization, and an evidence that Jesus is set for the ruin of many.

Recall the appalling calamity which befell the Jews. Their enmity for the Messiah did not cease with Herod. It continued with unabating rancor, until they saw Him dead upon the cross ; and then they directed their animosity against His followers. They cried : "*Let His blood be upon ourselves and upon our children.*" O obstinate unbelievers ! O savage criminals ! You were taken at your word, and the hand of an avenging

God has fallen heavy upon you. Your gorgeous city, the great centre of your unity and the glory of your people for generations, is fallen a prey to the invader. Encompassed on all sides by a pagan foe, your walls are battered down and your munificence becomes plunder for your enemies. Your inmates, the once chosen people of God, are not only besieged from without, but are ravaged by pestilence, famine, and intestine war. Over a million people perished during that memorable siege. The temple, celebrated by its magnificence, sanctified by the prayers of innumerable pious souls, dedicated to God and honored for its great sacredness, was devoured by flames. The Roman generals could not save it. It was doomed.

In after years, when the Jews attempted to rebuild it, fire came forth from the bowels of the earth ; and the very foundation was hurled from its bed,—thus verifying the prophecy of our Divine Lord, that a stone would not be left upon a stone. The Jews became fugitives, and even to this day, have not a city they can call their own,—a visible proof of their punishment, their obduracy, and their awful crime of deicide :—“ *Behold this Child is set for the ruin of many.*”

The downfall of Jerusalem was not more wonderful than that of Rome. The latter was styled the mistress of the world. Her sway was boundless, and her greatness unlimited. Following a code of laws based largely upon human wisdom, she ascended to vast power, and ruled sometimes with justice ; at other times with the sword. In the early days of the Christian Church, she was an insatiable enemy of the doctrine of Christ. We may not blame her so much for resisting foreign innovations against the worship she rendered to her gods ; this was natural enough ; but her abominable

brutality was without parallel or precedent. For three hundred years she persecuted the Christians with unrelenting barbarity. The ruins of Rome still tell of their cruel sufferings and tragic deaths. The very mention of some of her kings at this late day, provokes detestation for their memory, and awakens compassion for the early Christian martyrs. Finally, the patience of the Most High was exhausted. These pagans would not listen to the apostolic men sent for their conversion. Instead of listening to the saving truths of the Gospel, they put the ministers of the true God to death. The measure of their iniquities was overflowing. The indomitable right hand of the Almighty One was stretched out against them, and they withered before His irresistible power. The old Roman empire, majestic in her greatness, and unconquered by any foreign enemy, ultimately fell a victim to her own dissensions, to her own avarice and gluttony. The proud mistress of the world sank into decay, the result of tyranny, conspiracy, and lust. The cross rose from the ruins of the fallen empire. Christianity survived the cruelty of the pagans. The Pope's tiara took the place of Cæsar's diadem. How often history repeats the admonition that it is unwise and destructive to depart from God, or to defy His august power! How often has modern history reiterated the prophesy of holy Simeon: "*Behold this Child is set for the ruin of many.*"

This marvellous prediction finds its verification as well among those nations which knew Jesus but abandoned Him, as those which refused to accept His doctrine. For evidence, you need only consider Asia and lower Egypt—places at once famous for the brilliancy of their learning, for the firmness of their Christian faith, and the number of their virtues. Asia,

made illustrious by the eloquence and erudition of Basil, Chrysostom, and Gregory ; lower Egypt renowned for her Athanasius, Cyril, and Tertullian, not to mention St. Augustine, the celebrated scholar of Hippo ; Constantinople, once the rival of Rome and Athens, lost her literary pre-eminence, and became the capital of the Turkish empire. The famous seats of learning, the glory of Christian prestige ; the halo of sanctity, their saints, their learning, and their civilization, departed with the faith of Christ. The one was either crushed or banished ; and the other could not flourish without its supernatural sustenance, the Church of Jesus Christ. Deplorable, indeed, that society fails to see, at times, the destiny of the Catholic Church, and the guiding power of the Babe of Bethlehem. While obedient to that Church, while adoring that Divine Babe, nations prosper and the principles of civilization are diffused. Reject the authority of that Church, and Jesus, instead of being the actuating motive of your lives, becomes the principle of your ruin. In rejecting His Church, you expel Him from your hearts. He is set for the ruin of many, but the fault is with ourselves.

The religious revolutions headed by Martin Luther, produced disunion in religion, and gave birth to systems of philosophy which aimed, and still aim, at banishing God from the human heart. Men spurred on by the heat of discussion and the fervor of revenge, forgot God. They did, in the name of religion, the very things which religion forbids. Fanatical spirits reigned for a time, and wherever their sceptre swayed, there was blight and ruin. After a period of religious persecutions, animosity partially subsided, only to give skeptical philosophy an opportunity to shake its defi-

ant head. The Reformation, so called by its advocates, was based on private judgment ; and private judgment bred disorders. These disorders undermined religion and fomented rebellion against legitimate authority. The torch of faith was extinguished for many speculators of thought ; and speculation split Protestantism into countless divisions, while it accelerated infidelity, atheism, and immorality. All these culminated in the French Revolution, which was properly entitled the Reign of Terror. France was deluged with the blood of her best citizens. The religious were murdered and the altars of God desecrated. Man in his madness deified reason. A harlot was declared to be the goddess of reason ; and men supposed to be rational, bent the knee before her, in adoration. Justice was dethroned in the temple of law ; religion was exiled from her sacred asylums, while men crazed by frenzy, ruled the nation. The history of that frightful period demonstrates to what excesses men will go, when not restrained by the ameliorating influence of the Old Church. God abandoned them to their wickedness ; and the anarchy which followed, finds no comparison in the records of human existence. "*Behold this Child is set for the ruin of many . . . and for a sign which shall be contradicted.*" But woe to those who contradict ! Woe to those who force the Redeemer of mankind to confound their understanding and baffle their plots ! Ruin will overwhelm them ; disgrace and humiliation will follow the progress of ruin.

Even during the last half of the present century, men have plotted against God and His Church. The no-popery cry has been heard throughout England ; and in our own beloved country, convents and churches were demolished by fanatics who were justly styled

No-Nothings. They heralded far and wide, what they termed the last sigh of the dying papacy ; but these zealots read not history ; or, if they did, they failed to comprehend the lesson taught by the records of time. The Old Church had weathered many a storm ; and those of the nineteenth century, like others of former ages, only gave her new vitality, and presented another phenomenon for her enemies to meditate upon.

In our own time it is lamentable to consider how many have little faith, or no faith at all. It is estimated that not more than one-third of the population of this great nation are church-goers. From this number, subtract the members of the Catholic Church, and what have you left ? Of Prussia, it is said that scarcely any young man goes to church ; and that very little faith survives the shocks of the last three centuries. In England, a vast number care not whether there is a God, or not. In every part of Europe Agnosticism, Infidelity, and Atheism are dissipating what little faith there was in Protestantism, while the higher biblical criticism has successfully attacked the strongholds thereof. Everywhere are found large desertions from the army of Christian believers ; and this desertion breeds sensuality, divorce, suicide, and countless other evils, which are destroying society, corrupting youth, and filling jails. Truly, this Child is set for the ruin of many. Ruin, inevitable ruin ! when they hearken not to His voice and the teachings of His infallible Church. Ruin, consummate ruin ! when they blaspheme His Holy Name and go after the gods of this earth. Alas ! that man is so forgetful of his eternal good, and of the Saviour who died for him upon the Cross ! The Divine Child wishes not the destruction of any person ; but man's sinfulness brings ruin upon himself, though the Redeemer sorrows at the loss.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Behold, thy father and I have sought thee, sorrowing.
(St. Luke ii.—48.)

My Dear Friends : This part of the chapter of St. Luke should be interesting and instructive to all parents. It should teach them to have a watchful care over their children. It would appear to us, as if Jesus left his parents that they may seek Him ; and that He may thereby point out to parents their obligation in respect to their children. Mary, His mother, and His foster-father, St. Joseph, knew Jesus was not in bad company ; still they were alarmed lest He had wandered far from them, and that He may suffer from exposure and hunger. They sought and found Him. Mark His Mother's words : "*Behold, thy father and I have sought thee, sorrowing.*" Oh, would that more parents would seek their children, sorrowing ; that they would have more love for their children ; that they would learn from the example of Joseph and Mary !

It is to parents' own interest to train their children properly and shield them from danger. It is difficult, we admit, to do much with some children ; but water constantly falling wears away the hardest rock. Parents can accomplish a great deal for their children, if they imitate the action of the falling water. Everything

cannot be done at once in the training of children. Moreover, before parents blame their children too much, they should reflect a little. Are not the very parents themselves accountable for the proclivities of their children? How many a poor child inherits these very propensities for which he is punished; and for which the parents themselves should be chastised. Parents, think of this before you are too severe with your children. Your blood, and the blood of your families for generations, flows through the veins of your children. Might not this blood have been contaminated before your child's existence? Were not excesses committed for which your child now suffers, and on account of which you now flog him? Be reasonable and merciful toward your child. You ought to pity more than punish him. He has to battle with the evils of life and the ills with which his parents have cursed him. Oh, happy child, whose ancestry was virtuous! You are blessed by good parents, by inheriting good moral traits and innocent aspirations!

Another very important factor in the training of children, is good example. Environments unquestionably have influence upon everyone. Poets and other distinguished persons have been moulded by their surroundings; they breath forth in poetry and prose the influence of childhood. Literature is diamonded by the brilliant thoughts taken from the mines of childhood's recollections. Men become distinguished for good, or evil, chiefly as the environments of childhood were beautiful or disfigured. A child reared amidst swearing and drunkenness, cannot be as grand an object of future virtue as the child who has been nourished by the beauties of the heavens, the inspiration of the fields, the guidance of good parents, and the graces of

the Redeemer. These surroundings assist in directing or retarding the child's powers. They often make the dullard or the scholar, the saint or the sinner. Home is one of the places, and the chief place, for moulding the child's character. Make him a good child, and he will be a good man. True, indeed, "the child is father of the man." Let his first words be of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Dedicate the child to these, and they will care for him. He will never be lost to Jesus while under the protection of Joseph and Mary. Should he be led astray by false allurements, they will follow him, sorrowing; will find him, and he will never perish.

Teach your children to esteem the good and despise the bad. Teach them to aspire to honest pursuits and to avoid sordid gain. Teach them to respect the rights of others and defend their own rights. Never let them forget that there is a God. Teach them these things by your own example. The sculptor must have the ideal in his soul, which his genius is to breath into the marble. A parent must be a devout Catholic, if he would have his child devout. The parent must be honorable, that the child may be honorable. The example is the parents themselves, and the product of this example is the child. "*The just that walketh in his simplicity, shall leave behind him blessed children.*" (Prov. xx.—7.)

It cannot be denied but that good example produces good effects; and it is just as evident, that bad example corrupts everyone continuing within the sphere of its contagion. Many and many a parent is the cause of his child's destruction. Bad example—continuous bad example, with no good between, will contaminate any child. What sort of parents are those who have no interest in their children? who will

lead unchristian lives themselves, though they know such behavior will impoverish the souls of their little ones, and render them a prey to every destroying allurements? The mother is scolding with her neighbors, and the father is overcoming a spree. Alas! that these parents do not awaken from their stupor. They are damning their own souls, while they are training their children to be rowdies and outlaws. A drunken father in the corner, and a dirty mother in a filthy neighbor's house, do not afford much moral or religious capital for their children. These parents seldom go to church, nor do they send their children. These never say their prayers, because those never set the example. Poor children! you are to be pitied. If you ever grow to be worthy citizens and devout Catholics, you need not thank your father or mother.

My dear friends, do not allow your children too much freedom. Treat them kindly, still keep them always under judicious restraint. Let them not ramble late at night. "*Give thy son his way,*" says the inspired writer, "*and he shall make thee afraid.*" (Eccli. xxx.—9.) Entertain them the best you can at home; create in their young hearts a love for home. Let the father encourage them by remaining at home himself in the evenings. Protect them from bad associates. Though you are good, bad company will destroy your children. Call their attention, at intervals, to the ruin of some whom they know to have been wicked. This will produce in them a hatred for evil. If you must punish, be moderate; and love your children as much after as before the punishment. Train your children to be industrious. Industry is an anchor which, if prudently moored, will be a great safeguard to them. An industrious child is quite well protected. His diligence will

keep him from bad company, and engage him in worthy occupations. Of all education, industry is the best. When Joseph and Mary found Jesus in the temple, He was engaged in teaching the Jews. Though Jesus is the Son of God, He was, when on earth, not idle, but industrious. Discipline your children to imitate His ennobling example.

Besides the points to which your attention has been drawn, permit me to add a few more words. Allow me to exhort you to instruct your children. Instruct them in the ways of God when they are young, and when they are old they will not depart therefrom. Teach them as soon as they can lisp, to pray. By thus elevating their minds, you are infusing spiritual nourishment into their young souls, and directing their thoughts to the highest attainments. You are developing and polishing the intellects of your little ones; you are bringing them nearer to their Eternal Father. When they are old enough, bring them to church, and send them to your school, that they may grow in wisdom as the Child Jesus grew. You will be rewarded for your labors. They will grow up with the love and fear of God in their hearts. In your old age, they will be your solace. You will rejoice in their righteousness, and be assisted by their generosity. With joy you will speak of their success, and by their efforts you will be made happy. They will not be roving the streets at late hours, but will be at home in peace. They will not be found in prison, but in church. They will be an honor to your declining years; they will be a fortress of strength to their country,—the glory of the Church and the children of God.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

And Jesus was also invited, and His disciples, to the marriage. (St. John ii.—2.)

My Dear Friends : From the inspired records we learn of this notable wedding, and of the distinguished guests who were present. No doubt, preparations for the festivities were not neglected. The friends and acquaintances of the contracting parties, were invited. The Gospel read for you, tells us of the presence of the Blessed Virgin,—*Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was there.* An invitation was also extended to her Divine Son and His disciples. They complied with the request, thus augmenting the solemnities of the occasion. If you judge from the dignity of the guests, never was there so magnificent a nuptials. The Mother of Jesus was there—she who is venerated by the faithful of every age and Christian nation, who is the most august creature whom God has created. She was there to add joy to the festive gathering. The disciples who are crowned by the diadem of faith and the glory of saints, were also present. How happy, indeed, must that marriage be at which Jesus attends ! How innocent the contracting parties ! No scandal there ; no crime, no lawlessness ! It is a heavenly feast, and the vows exchanged are ratified by the divine benediction.

Truly the words of St. Paul find the guaranty of their truth in this honorable wedding of Cana : “ *This is a great sacrament ; but I speak in Christ and in the Church.*” (Epes. v.—32.)

There are many weddings, I am sorry to say ; yea, many Catholic weddings at which Jesus is not in attendance. Particularly is this true of those persons who call themselves Catholics, but who disrespect and violate the laws of the Church, when they rush into the state of matrimony, unprepared by grace and unblessed by the prayers of the Church. Rashly they pledge their vows ; nor do they care whether Jesus is present or not. Instead of invoking the benedictions of heaven, they bring upon their young heads the curses of an ill-devised plot. They will live to regret their rashness. Tears will tell of the remorse to which folly gave birth. Would it not be better to invite Jesus to the marriage-feast by shaping their conduct according to His well-defined law—by the worthy reception of the sacraments? If you prepare in this manner, He will not only heed your invitation, but He will bless your nuptials by His presence. For this you will be happier on the day of your marriage, and on every day thereafter. It is true, trouble and vexations many come, as they always do ; still remorse arising from your own rashness, disgrace at your unholy marriage, will not commingle their bitterness with the gall of other misfortunes.

Young people should pray often to God, that should they ever enter into the state of matrimony, they may be blessed with good partners, sanctified by the graces of God and the prayers of the Church. Matrimony is an important epoch in the lives of people. When once taken, it is taken forever, or during the life-time

of one or other of the contracting parties. On account of its gravity and its consequences and its duration, it demands judicious thought. Young people should, therefore, make nearly as much preparation for the pious reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony, as candidates for the priesthood do for the sacred reception of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Both are of long duration ; both bring sorrows or joys ; both are beneficial and necessary ; and upon the proper or improper reception of one or the other depends largely the peace or the misery of the life of the recipient here on earth, and hereafter, beyond the grave.

We are told, and observations prove, that some Catholics are unhappy in the marriage state, though they have been united in holy wedlock by a priest, and have complied with all the external requirements of the Church. Let us answer that when the both contracting parties are well behaved, practical Catholics, and receive with pure souls the Sacrament of Matrimony, they seldom, if ever, meet with scandalous trouble. Fortune may not, it is true, always smile upon them ; but in the hour of sorrow or the time of need, they will look to their God for consolation and help. They will be strangers to divorce courts and scandalous sensations. Their confidence in God will not be frustrated by adversity ; nor will their heavenly Father be deaf to their appeals.

The fact, however, that they were married by a priest, may not warrant them endless happiness, nor vouch for the purity of their conduct before or after marriage. A girl will resolve to marry a young man who is a drunkard. She will reform him. She will make a fine young man of him ! He is so very nice ! A perfect gentleman ! but for one fault ; and she will

cure him of this. They are married, but she does not cure him. He becomes more of a sot than before. Her prospects are blasted ; she lives to see her folly, and drink from the dregs of bitter disappointment. Her life of promise is wrecked. She lives a prey to misery, neglect, and want. Would it not have been wiser for her to try her ability at reforming the young man before she married him ? If she failed in her attempt, the failure would be evidence enough to persuade her that after marriage she could never succeed.

On the other hand, the young man may be a very good young man—industrious, saving, and sober. He becomes acquainted with a girl. She captivates him by her charms, throws about him the leash of her enchantments. He thinks himself blessed. He knows she is a flirt ; but this even attracts him the more, just as the sirens of old enchanted, only to destroy. She is just the person. This lightness of temperament will disappear. He will be happy in the possession of such a charmer. They marry, but she still remains a flirt. By frivolity she was trained to be restless and changeable. Her training has not been dissipated. Ere long, to his joy, sorrow succeeds, while despair expels all hope. She brings disgrace and dishonor on both. She was every fellow's girl before marriage ; and it is no great wonder if the same notions will always continue to shape her course. He lives to curse his luck, and to curse her, too.

Let us take another view of marriage life ; for it is like a kaleidoscope—it has many varieties. Here is a husband and his wife. They were once poor—then they were happy. They struggled hard and faithfully. Their industry brought wealth ; but like many another,

they could not withstand the unkind influences of prosperity. He remains the same common-sensed man he always was, cares little for style, and less for pretensions. She becomes, nevertheless, very sedate, studies etiquette, apes at the manners of others, and invites often her friends and acquaintances for luncheon. He has no use for such nonsense, and retains his old habits. Notwithstanding all her lectures, she cannot make him social or entertaining. She aims to be one of the bonton, while he is immovable and unimprovable. She is often mortified. With much polish, combined with gentle tact, she apologizes to her friends for his rudeness. His conduct, however, becomes more and more insufferable in proportion as she attains to greater refinement. She repeatedly says to herself in the recesses of her self-complacent bosom: "What an idiot I was to marry such an ignoramus, so uncouth, so boorish, so unsocial! What do my friends think of me? What do they think of my putting up with his mulishness, insolence, lack of style, want of gayety? Why, it is preposterous!" She evidently thinks she is above her husband in attainments; in proportion as she ascends in her own estimation of herself, the more discontented she becomes. In the meanwhile she forms the acquaintance of a very polished man; so suave, so courteous, so entertaining, so everything which constitutes a galvanized rogue. She is charmed by his presence. He is just her ideal of a man. Some evening the old gentleman upon returning from labor, finds a note saying his mate has flown, and he thanks his God that he is at rest. Not many weeks are required to teach her of the fine polished man's insincerity, and to render her sane once more. Scandal, however, follows disgrace. The serenity of a once

happy home is broken. The family is overwhelmed with shame, while the wife and mother is cast upon the world, a wreck for the warning of others.

Allow me to suppose another case. In this the husband assumes all the arrogance of acquired wealth. The wife is a simple-minded, industrious woman. She has always been inured to drudgery; nor has the acquisition of property modified her modest habits or awakened any pretensions to superiority. She loves her family and her domestic concerns. For her husband and children, she lives and toils. Their happiness is her joy, and she desires no other temporal reward. He, on the contrary, flatters himself on his prosperity. It has all been due to his sagacity. He has grown of late wondrously large in his own estimation; his great ability has made him rich! His tact, his plans, his consummate genius, have borne fruit! It could not be otherwise with him. He begins to look upon his wife, the partner of his toil, as a menial servant, one beneath him. She does not dress to please him. She still retains her old manners—abrupt, ungenial, and coarse. He does not see how coarse, selfish, and probably dishonest himself is. His business or his money leads him into intercourse with other men and places. Their conduct is noticed by him. They are out for a good time. Why should he be moored to the apron-strings of his wife? Why not do as his immoral associates do? In he plunges. His neighbors will never hear of his escapades; and if they do, who cares? He becomes reckless. The haunts of sin are soon known to him. His companions are the representatives of lust and debauchery. His excesses render him dissatisfied with the surroundings of his family and his home. His wife is behind the age. Into the divorce

court he goes. Witnesses are bribed. Probably the judge receives some compensation. The lawyers are well rewarded, and his virtuous mate ceases, according to the civil law, to be his wife. She is seized with dismay. The children are submerged by affliction. Their mother is innocent, they know ; but her innocence does not shield them from disgrace. Shame has set her destroying hand upon them. Happiness gives way to grief. Despair robs them of their honorable aspirations. The future is black with the storms of adversity,—all is lost.

At this juncture, they have a friend, in the Catholic Church, of which they have always been faithful members. She warns their father that he dare not put away his lawful wife. In the words of our divine Saviour, she says to him : “ *What God has joined together, let not man dare put asunder.*” You cannot divorce yourself from the woman you have sworn to love ! There is no cause for separation ! If you persist, you will bring down upon yourself the malediction of an outraged God ! The curse of your innocent wife and helpless children will follow your soul ! Your own crime will call aloud to heaven for address ! Your fond expectations will change to disasters, each tormenting you for the injuries you have perpetrated upon your family, yourself, against your Church, and against your God. Should you attempt to marry again, I hold such marriage null and void. You shall never be a participant in my graces, or the recipient of my sacraments, until you have atoned for your injustice.

He, however, obtains a divorce, and is married again by a squire or preacher ; but he will live to curse the day he became a fugitive from his Church. He will curse himself for refraining from Mass on Sunday, and

neglecting to say his morning and evening prayers. These delinquencies were the beginnings of his downfall. From these, dates the commencement of his ruin. His future will be haunted by the condemnation of his Church, by the sorrows of his children, by the desolation of his faithful wife.

Alas! how often the prospects of a flourishing family are destroyed by the errors of a wife or husband. Fortunately the ravages of divorce are not much felt among the members of the Catholic Church. You should be grateful for this protection ; society should be grateful ; all mankind should be grateful to her for the unrelenting care with which she guards the sacredness of home.

Is it not, then, advisable for all you who contemplate matrimony, to make preparations by prayer ? Ask Jesus and His Blessed Mother to be present at your nuptials ; and live, that their blessings may never depart from your homes.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY ;
OR, THE
TWENTY-FOURTH AFTER PENTECOST.

Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. (Math. viii.—10.)

My Dear Friends : Faith is of two kinds : historical or human, and divine faith. Historical faith rests upon the veracity of the historian ; divine faith centres in the immutable infinite Being, God. History, in its principal features, must be considered true, although written by fallible man. About articles of divine faith, there can be no question, for these are infallible. The historian may err, but God is truth. Notwithstanding the fallibility of the historian, you believe the authentic records of time. This is imperative ; because should you disbelieve history, you have no way of learning the accounts of events occurring even one century ago. You never saw George Washington, yet you credit history when it tells you such a man flourished in this country. Monuments of marble and bronze, which are, indeed, only history of the past in another form, confirm your belief. A man known to you for his integrity, will tell you of a fact coming under his observation ; and you accept his testimony—you rely upon his veracity. If you go back over the

great avenue of time, down which the human race has travelled for thousands of years, you question not the notable events seen on your way. You deny not that Albertus Magnus lived and became renowned. In France, you behold Napoleon Bonaparte. More distant, Charlemagne. Soon Cicero and Cæsar, with a collection of other notables, appear upon the arena of national contention, and far beyond, enveloped by the mists of remote ages, are discerned distinguished characters as well as important events. To the reality of these you all give assent ; why, then, should any one hesitate to accept the Sacred Scriptures approved by the Church of God ? Are they not at least deserving of as much fidelity as other historical works ? They are, in part, historical ; and therefore no sane person ought to refuse them his confidence. There are some, nevertheless, who question not the reliability of Gibbon's Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire, but would reject or doubt the revealed word of God.

If the human race clings to the memory of the past, and anxiously labors for its preservation, can it consistently despise the Holy Bible ? But whether man despises it, or not, he cannot discard it. On account of its vast interest to mankind, it is that so many doubts and difficulties arise. Besides, the blind often lead the blind. A person may be deeply concerned in perpetuating history ; but the human race will never be so solicitous for the perpetuity of profane history as that of the sacred. The importance of the latter is as much greater than the former, as the eternal interests of man are above his temporal. He may say : "What matters it to me whether Philip of Macedon ever lived, or Thomas Moore was beheaded. It is of no vital importance to me whether Cæsar had never been born, or

Henry VIII. had never reigned. But the Scriptures contain an account of God's dealings with the human race—of His justice and His mercy, of His beneficence and His love. In these I find the record of man's origin; and from their contents learn man's destiny. I perceive the condition of things as they now exist, and it is not of so great concern to me who brought about these conditions, as the awful thoughts of religion which disturb my heart while they rack my intellect. Is the Bible reliable? is it inspired? is it infallible? These are doubts which torture my soul. Is there nothing upon which I can rest my hope for the future? Nothing which will give tranquillity to me now? I am worse off than the sailor wrecked in mid-ocean, with the stormy billows breaking upon him. He fears for his temporal safety; I am tossed upon the mad sea of doubt, in dread of the present, and alarmed for the future."

To such a one, a Catholic may reply: "Be composed. Do you not know of the Catholic Church? She declares the Bible is inspired, and her declarations are infallible. She has authority to teach; consider these teachings together with her claims,—indisputable in their source, in their nature unchangeable, in every age unerring. So great has been the faith placed in her, that St. Augustine said: 'I would not believe the Scriptures, had not the Church moved me to do so.'" To this the other answers: "What guaranty have I that your Church is the legitimate teacher of the human race on matters of religion? Or what security have I in placing both my temporal and my eternal destiny in her keeping?" You may say to him: "Friend, the Catholic Church has endured the storms of persecution for nineteen hundred years. Her own members have often

been rebellious, causing her grief and dividing themselves into factions. Thrones have decayed, but she still survives. Her doctrines have withstood the corroding influences of time and the opposition of the world. Compare her with everything else, and you cannot fail to see her divine prerogatives. Moreover, in the persons of the apostles, she was present with Jesus Himself. She witnessed His death on the cross. She rejoiced in His resurrection. It was to her He declared : *'I shall send you the Holy Spirit, who shall teach you all things, and I Myself shall abide with thee forever.'* As the Holy Ghost imparts to her all truth, she possesses the doctrine with which she instructs ; and since the Son of God cannot be associated with the false, it follows that the Church never teaches error. But Jesus has averred : *'I Myself shall abide with thee forever.'* Is this not evidence enough to convince you of her divine commission ? No less should you be persuaded to confide your soul to the care of that Church whose credentials were irrevocably sealed by the Divine Person, Jesus Christ."

"All this is well," remarks the skeptic. "But, ah, the awful thought rushes in upon me, is Jesus Christ God ? Are all Christians deceived ? Am I only a dupe of blind, relentless fate ? Does the faculty called reason, only act according to some law over which I have no control ? Is vice and virtue only the result of an inborn wickedness or goodness, predisposing man to evil or good as tyrannical inclinations dictate ?" An answer to all these doubts is found in the Gospel of to-day. Everyone must admit that it required super-human power to purify the human system of leprosy ; nor was it any ordinary power which healed the Centurion's servant. In last Sunday's Gospel you learned how

Jesus called forth the Ruler's daughter from death. In the performance of this miracle, divine power was necessary. Had our Saviour not this power, He must have received it from heaven. But how could God impart to Him this power, if Jesus was not His Son. Our Lord said: "I and the Father are one," thus maintaining His own divinity. Were He an impostor, could God have favored by His co-operation such infernal imposition? By such an act, He would favor deception and injustice. Easier it is to believe that there is no God, than to admit His existence and at the same time attribute to Him such infamous acts; for God cannot act contrary to His eternal attributes. Such conduct would involve a contradiction, and be equal to a denial of God's existence.

But the skeptic is as deficient in his belief in God, as in his belief of the divinity of Christ; and exclaims: "I know not whether there is a God or not! Every fiber of my being wrys under the influence of this terrible condition of my mind! I have thought, reflected, endeavored to fathom the depths of these hidden mysteries of Nature, of these human phenomena coming often under my observation, until I am engulfed in a whirlpool of doubt." Again, he should find sufficient proof of God's existence in the Gospel to which I have referred. Divine power was manifested in the performance of these stupendous works. The skeptic cannot explain them except upon the admission of the existence of God. He seizes every opportunity to increase his unbelief, while he blindly bars out every convincing fact of the supernatural. Were he as studious in the acquisition of proofs in support of religion as he is assiduous in misconstruing phenomena to oppose divine faith, he would be happy

and content in the consciousness of God's friendship.

There are, furthermore, many arguments derived from the nature of things, to demonstrate the existence of God. To consider them to-day would carry us beyond the scope of a sermon. To one argument, however, I invite your attention. It is brief, and as cogent as brief. The skeptic may deny that there is a God. He may deny that the sun is now shining in the heavens. He may deny that you are now present in this church. He may even deny his own existence. But when he comes to deny that he denies, then he admits there is a God ; that is when he knows that an operation is going on in his mind by which he denies the existence of everything ; he acknowledges that the knowing faculty exists ; and this faculty must be finite or infinite. All things must be of these two classes or divisions. Now, if the faculty is infinite, he admits the existence of an infinite something ; but an infinite something is God. If he argues his knowing faculty is finite, he also admits the infinite ; for the finite is always dependent upon some other being for its existence ; and because there are only two classes of beings: since one is the finite, the other must be the infinite.

My Christian friends, you may be somewhat incredulous in accepting this presentation of the skeptic's mental state, and consider it only fanciful. But if any of you have conversed with an honest unbeliever, you know the views given are no exaggeration ; and you know, too, that to give an accurate description of the workings of his mind in reference to religion, approaches close to the impossible. Outside of the Catholic Church, everything in religious matters is confused. Scarcely does a conversation turn on religion, when

doubts are exchanged, and it is easy to judge from the ensuing discussion, how the faith of non-Catholics is disturbed. I have often spoken with the skeptic and agnostic. They were sincere, intelligent men, but had no faith in revealed truths. They desired to penetrate into the unknown and inexplicable. Because they could not comprehend some things, they doubted almost everything. They seemed to be men desirous of acquiring faith ; but their method was one of research beyond their power of apprehension ; instead of prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and a humble confidence in God. They believed they were greater when they soared, than when they stooped ; and here it was they made their first mistake.

We should rejoice that we are blessed with the inestimable blessing of faith in God. We ought never abuse this great gift. You must always remember, and I must never forget, that faith is a gratuitous gift from our Heavenly Father. If you misuse this gift, God will withdraw it from you. You will, then, be like those bad Catholics whose inflamed tongues breath forth wrath, lies, and venom against that Church in whose bosom they once found peace and contentment. Pray to God often, that He may ever preserve in you an ardent faith. Imitate the Centurion ; and when the eternal Ruler will say to you : “ *As you believe, let it be done accordingly to you,*” may the reward of your faith be heaven !

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY ;
OR,
THE TWENTY-FIFTH AFTER PENTECOST.

And when He entered into the ship, His disciples followed Him. (Math. viii.—23.)

My Dear Friends : When a person embarks in a ship, he sets out for a journey or voyage. He may encounter tempestuous seas, dangers may assail him. Even death may attack him ; and in the struggle death may be victorious. The disciples entering the ship indicate their willingness to follow our Divine Lord and to brave the dangers which may arise. Ere long their courage was put to the test. The waves became too vicious, and in their dismay, they cried for help. But you have noted, from the Gospel, that the Master of the seas did not abandon His followers ; He restored tranquillity to the waters, while he chided them for their want of faith. He seemed to say : "*Why are you fearful ; why stand aghast at the upheaval of the sea ! Am I not with you ?*" The Son of God commanded, and the sea became calm. Thus it is ever ; God will not suffer His faithful followers to perish. The sea of tribulation may break upon them ; the rocky promontories of temp-

tation may terrify them ; but the omniscient Pilot Who directs their frail barque, sleeps not. It appears sometimes to the afflicted, as if they were forgotten, as if they were doomed to an endless night with no tomorrow's sun. One trouble follows another. To affliction, is added poverty ; or to sickness, death, until the survivor has well-nigh lost all hope. Still he must remember that were there no struggles, there would be no virtue. Without trials, there can be no reward. Every disaster of life, every disappointment and loss, has its purpose. God knows best. Sorrow is often a guardian angel leading you away from sin. False friends deceive you, but the deception bids you think. If properly weighed, it will make you wiser. Obstacles and disappointments enlarge your sphere of knowledge and nurture resolution. Hence it is, that relying upon God's protection, good is drawn from evil ; and you are the better for the struggle in which, perhaps, much of your energies were exhausted.

Let us, however, not deceive ourselves ; because a great deal of our adversity is due to our own defects or transgressions. Others, it is true, not seldom bestow it upon us with a lavish hand ; but we should not forget that whatever comes from God, without any fault of ours, will do us no harm. On the contrary, it is for our good ; because God, our greatest benefactor and our best friend, will shield, with His irresistible right arm, those confiding in Him. "*If anyone comes after Me,*" He says, "*let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*" Whether the cross is put on your mangled shoulders by yourselves, by your enemies, or is the sweet yoke of Christ, it should be borne with patience and confidence in God. It must be carried, although it galls. Its weight may torture the heart and benumb

the intellect, but relinquish it, you cannot. Borne, it must be. Yes ; but whither ? To heaven, assuredly. "*Deny yourselves ; take up your cross and follow Me.*" Follow whom ? Jesus, the Saviour of mankind. Whither does He lead ? To the home of peace and joy, where crosses enter not. Remember that each one must bear his cross in harmony with the divine will, in order that it may be meritorious. Deny yourselves. Abandon those places or things which have made your cross so heavy and oppressive. You, perhaps, have made your own cross, have fixed thorns therein, have been cruel with yourselves. You were in quest of worldly pleasure. You were tired of the consciousness of innocence, of the happiness of God's friendship. Sin allured you. You were fascinated by its charms. It promised joys, but it imposed a cross. Still, do not despair ; God is patient, and besides He is as merciful as He is patient. He loves the sinner, though He hates sin. He wishes not the death of a sinner ; but that he may repent, and obtain pardon. Our follies sometimes make us wise, their consequences bring us often closer to God ; and transgressors of God's law become oft-times His most faithful followers.

It may be that some poor mortal, in his ignorance and malice, has fashioned your cross, with a spirit of malignity equalled only by his deceitfulness. He or she studied how to make it painful and poisonous. The inventor rejoiced in the success of his devilish design. The sufferings of the cross-bearer are his joys. In the secrecy of his heart, he exults in the triumph ; and may even insult the afflicted one by derision or ridicule. He has succeeded. His victim is apparently conquered. His low, base cunning is an overmatch for the unwary and the honorable. But

mark, his or her triumph will not be permanent. The conquered and crushed will become the victor, if he puts his confidence in God. Let him carry the cross manfully. With undaunted brow, he may defy his enemies, if he is only a true follower of Him Who first consecrated the cross by His precious blood. Villainy and cowardice and enmity will prove a heavier weight for the other. Better be the truthful, honorable, great-souled, suffering ; than the malicious person with his cunningness, deceit, and debased character, exulting. God will send His ministering angel to the former. From the depths of wicked craft, the Almighty power will bring forth good, as He once brought light out of the abyss of darkness. A wealth of benefits—physical, mental, moral, and religious, will arise from where all was gloom, disappointment, and sorrow. When a wrong is done you, offer it to God. Nor should you neglect to ward off a similiar attack in the future from the same source. You are not expected to remain supinely while your enemy destroys you. Protect yourself, therefore, but injure nobody. Should you be injured, present the injury to God, and implore His protection. Be faithful to God, and He will never desert you.

Should the heart-aches and the trials be from God, then you ought to rejoice ; for He punishes those whom He loves. Sickness, ill-fortune, and even death are sent to draw you closer to Him, or to protect you from deeper trouble. The sorrows of life are incomparable to the joys of heaven. To be faithful adherents to the standard of our divine Saviour, entails sufferings ; but these sufferings bring untold rewards on earth, as well as in the eternal kingdom of God. You may not understand why you are unfortunate, while the wicked are enjoying prosperity.

In all the troubles of life you imitate the disciples by following your Divine Master ; your conduct is ever that of a steadfast adherent to Him ; yet others having no regard for God or His laws, meet with success where you only find failure. Wealth, comfort, and happiness fill their swelling sails as they glide onward upon the summer sea of prosperity. Disappointment, sometimes poverty, often disaster, are your lot. This state of things induced the Psalmist to say by inspiration : "*But my feet were almost moved ; my steps had well-nigh slipped ; because I had a zeal on account of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners.*" (Ps. lxxii.—2, 3.) You perceive that sinners are not only prosperous now, but that they always were. The Pagan chided the followers of Christ, on this account. In their blindness, they upbraided the unfortunate. "It is a strange God," they were wont to say, "Whom you adore. Every sacrifice is cheerfully made by you. You are attached to Him with an unwavering devotion. You would, indeed, die for Him. Nevertheless you suffer all the ills of life. We would not put our trust in Him Who would thus afflict us ; nor would we confide in Him for future happiness, Who would not assist us here." This style of argument is very plausible, and in all sincerity ; we admit that the mystery of God's dealings with mankind is beyond our comprehension. Enough for us to know, is that God is just. His ways are as much above ours, as the heavens are above the earth. Some hold that the prosperous on earth, though sinners, have done some good works ; and, since God is just, He rewards them on earth for their goodness ; but of an eternal reward, they are unworthy. Again, many of the great ones of the earth stoop to the commission of things both dishonorable and

dishonest. They hesitate not in defrauding the weak and crushing the innocent. For such human degradation, a true Christian cannot barter everything noble, everything sacred, everything elevated and elevating.

After all considerations are duly weighed, is it not questionable whether the favored ones of fortune are happier or more content than those who have to battle with the pangs of adversity? Are those whom the world calls fortunate, really the fortunate ones? May not the case be reversed? May not the others who regard themselves wretched, because they are poor, be the happier. Could you draw aside the curtain which hides the secrets of the heart, your opinion may be changed. Look into the affairs of people; study their lives; and you will be convinced that they are in need of pity, not envy; that they are oftentimes the most miserable, who are thought most happy. With some, an insatiable greed for money; with others, a burning desire for fame; with a third class, a tireless ambition for positions of emolument,—robs them of all rest and comfort. These may be envied, they may be fawned upon, they may be extolled for their wealth of mind and temporal possessions; but they are not happier than those whose lot is cast among the lowly. As the poet (Pope) has tersely expressed himself:

“Order is heaven’s first law; and this confessed,
Some are, and must be, greater than the rest—
More rich, more wise; but who infers from hence
That such are happier, shocks all common sense.”

According to the same poet, the innocent are truly happy:

“Know then this truth, enough for man to know,
Virtue alone is happiness here below.”

The virtuous in high or low station, possess the genuine jewels of the soul. And where is the true man unknown to wealth or fame, who would exchange his condition with him whose greatness is built upon the ruin of others ? He has degraded human nature by his remorseless treatment of his fellow-men. His ambition was to succeed, though thousands perished under his scourge ; and if honest indignation spurned his contemptible acquisitions, it was punished for its arrogance. Notwithstanding his pompous conceits, a slave might hesitate before changing places with this maggot of humanity. Where is the follower of Him Who said : "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land,*" that would buy pride, insolence, and vanity at such a price ? It ill-becomes anyone to be such a monster, much more a Catholic. How can a Catholic reconcile oppression of the poor, defrauding laborers of their wages, cheating, blasphemy, and debauchery, with the tenets of his religion, or with the qualifications of Christ's disciples. To be a good citizen, you must be a good Catholic ; and to be a good Catholic, you must be a true follower of Jesus. Do not deceive yourselves. Do not exculpate yourselves by finding fault with others. Never forget that true greatness is ever associated with equitable principles, condescension, and beneficence. Strive to be Catholic, not only in name, but also in action. Follow unflinchingly your eternal Guide, Jesus ; and then should storms of animosity, ill-luck, trial, and disaster break upon you, your Saviour will rebuke the winds, and tranquillity of soul will ensue.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY;
OR, THE
TWENTY-SIXTH AFTER PENTECOST.

Master, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it cockle? (St. Math. xiii.—27.)

Of the influence of bad company, my dear friends, you cannot be ignorant. You have seen its effects. Probably some of you have been and still are its victims. How difficult it is to avoid this evil intercourse, you also know. Pernicious companionship is easily enough acquired, but not so easily relinquished. The atmosphere of bad company is contagious, and the contagion affects body and soul. No safeguard is sufficient to protect anyone exposing himself to such danger. At times it disrobes itself of its repugnant features, and puts on the semblance of innocence and gentle affability. In this guise, it is the most treacherous, and consequently the most destructive. The unsuspecting are duped. They are unarmed by flattery and conquered by seduction. They question not the intention of the enemy until resistance is well-nigh powerless. They have been unwise, but they will have a long time to repent of their folly.

Now we may inquire of what class, or classes of people, is bad company composed. The investigation is an awful one ; for in bad company are found those who once led angelic lives ; who knew not evil, except as they read or heard of it ; whose lives were pure, and whose aspirations were lofty. From a home both happy and innocent they were lured away gradually, until innocence was bartered for guilt ; and the tranquillity of a pure conscience was exchanged for the miseries of sin. Others there are who imbibed wickedness with the nourishment drawn from the mother's breast. The parents were bad. The child's associations from the cradle were corrupt and corrupting. From infancy, the very air which it breathed, was contaminated by the foulness of vice. Yea ; it may be that the child is cursed by illegitimacy. Thus, on the threshold of existence the sin of the mother is a lamentable stain upon her pitiable offspring. Beginning life in so deplorable a condition, surrounded by evil influence, absorbing evil with its growth, it is not to be wondered at, if the child in after years fill a prison cell. It cannot be doubted, however, but that such a child sometimes becomes a good and useful man. The ascension from sin to righteousness is due to the grace of God, which manifests itself in various ways, but oftentimes by producing for the child a change of environments. From degradation he arises by an infusion of the good seed, the word of God, into his soul. How has the transformation been brought about ? Perhaps by a good book which fell into his hands at an opportune moment ; perhaps by curiosity which induced him into a church in which he heard, for the first time, the solemn and beautiful truths of religion ; or he might have been moved to the depths of his heart by the conduct of

some devout and gracious person. In some manner or another the grace of God found an entrance into his soul. He did not repel the invitation to enter into the Lord's vineyard ; but with a heart as humble as it was sincere, he bowed his will to the earnest entreaty of the Saviour of mankind.

Are any of you associated with bad company ? Then listen to the Son of God, beseeching you in the agony of His sacred passion to come to Him. Will you refuse ? Will you weigh everything that is pure and honorable and ennobling, with everything base and unprincipled and degrading, yet choose the latter ? If you do, the wretchedness entailed by a life of sin, will be your reward. The bad seed sown by your enemy, will yield the weeds of debasement, disease, and prematured old age. The day may come when you will call to God for mercy ; but He will not hearken to you, and you will die in your sins. You abused His graces. You wronged yourselves. The punishment inflicted is the penalty of your own rashness and disobedience. God desired you to be eternally happy—you doomed yourselves to endless perdition.

Are the members of such company ashamed of their associates ? Quite the contrary ; they pride themselves on their licentious toughness. Is it not strange how many dislike to be considered good ? They refrain from many acts of devotion, either because they fear to become remarkable, or because they will be chided by their companions. Yet the wicked will boast of their low, infernal conduct ; and are enthusiastically thankful to those who call them tough. On the street corners, you will see them parade their vileness in filthy language gathered from the lowest slums of crime and sin. Does the blush of shame mantle that face which hides the

hell within? Oh, no; if an acquaintance passes by, their offensiveness is the bolder and more pronounced. They want to be known. They want to be regarded as the leaders of a sin-cursed gang. Enter the saloon. There is another disgusting sight. Men, old and young, in a half-drunken stupor, dribbling out some unintelligible jargon; profanity the most horrible is the only thing intelligible. And there are other places of so treacherous a nature as to render them unmentionable—places where virtue is lost and impurity triumphs; where the great faculties of the soul and the exalted sensibilities of the heart are enslaved; where God is ignored and the devil enthroned!

Bad company is one of the enemies who sows the cockle. Almighty God and the true Christian guide sow the good seed. Good parents also cultivate in their children a meritorious fruit. The enemy is alert. Prompted by hell, he sows the seed which suffocates the noble emotions of the heart, which robs the soul of its vigor, which converts the mysterious organ of speech into a weapon of destruction against man and an instrument of insult to God. His breath is pollution; his prayer, blasphemy; degradation is his ambition, and the ruin of others, his glory! What is his reward for so much injury to others? Has he won distinction? Yes; the distinction which infamy gives to ruffians. After a few years of debauchery, mark the distinction. Prematured old age, a deject countenance, a vague, empty leer of the eye, a diseased body, and a filthy soul—these are the characteristics distinguishing him from the rest of mankind. Are they sufficient compensation for the sacrifices he made upon the altar of debauchery? Are they such as you would barter an honored life, a happy death, and a joyful eternity for?

Would you refuse the exchange ; then beware of bad company ? Many of the bad were once good. Temptation overcame them. They fell, rose again ; but falling too often, they became enfeebled, abused grace, and ultimately were unable to rise.

How many a poor victim has cursed in the agony of his heart, the companions who worked his ruin ! How often has he cursed father and mother for their bad example, or perhaps on account of their indulgent leniency toward him ! Had they been more severe, had they given good example by the devoutness of their own lives, he would not now be led to prison, with manacled hands. Had they seen to it that he went to Church on Sundays, that he attended school, that he was at home in the evening at a seasonable hour, he would not now be doomed to a disgraceful sentence in the penitentiary. Ah, but many and many a time, the mother in tears begged him to keep away from bad company ! Again and again she implored him to go to confession ! The father, too, besought him to be at home early in the evening ; told him of the terrible result of rowdiness ; followed him at night, and brought him home from a saloon or gambling table. It was all to no purpose. He was infatuated by wickedness, and on his way to prison he has time for sober thoughts. He blames others ; but he cannot deny that his punishment is the outcome of an obstinate, ill-directed temper. Should the law declare his crime punishable by death instead of prison, then the awful thought of an approaching death, infamous in its nature and horrible in its execution, would awaken the keenest remorse for his unfortunate career. The happy days of boyhood, when life was young and hope buoyant, would reappear in all their beauty and innocence, adding thus more pain to the shafts of remorse !

In the seclusion of his cell, he considers the opportunities lost or abused ; the happy peace enjoyed in the morning of life ; the parents who were kindly affectionate, the brothers and sisters who loved him, and who now weep over his misfortune, and pray he may not die upon the scaffold ! Then he condemns himself in this manner : “ It is true, I gave the fatal blow, but I was maddened by whiskey. I had no intention, an hour before, of committing murder. I would suffer death a thousand times, before I would do such a terrible deed. My pals are to blame. It was they who gave me the drink to blunt my reason and to nerve my hand. It was they, too, who gave me the dagger ; and when I refused, they called me a coward, and asked me to have another drink ; it would make a man out of me—would bring back my courage, which they had so often admired ! I was urged on, until I knew not myself ; nor weighed the crime which I am soon to appease by my life ! ”

Believe me, my friends, that this picture is not overdrawn. It is impossible to describe the feelings of the condemned, or to overestimate the damnable influence of bad company. Such cases as I have attempted to portray, are of daily occurrence. You read the public prints, and you, therefore, know what I say is true. But the newspapers tell not of the pangs of the heart, of the anguish of families, of the destruction of hopes, of the blasting of fortunes, occasioned by pernicious associates ! These are hidden within broken hearts, and contained in the sighs which rise to heaven for solace, for pardon, and for hope !

Thus far your attention has been dwelling upon the waywardness, fall, and destruction of a son ; but somehow the degradation of a daughter is more lamentable. On account of the delicacy required in the treatment

of remarks upon a topic so sorrowful, I shall be brief. Girls should be discriminate in the company they keep. They ought not associate with other girls whose conduct is questionable. If these are loud on the street, if they go with young men of low reputation, every girl who does not wish to blight her future, must avoid them. Girls are not careful ; I have seen them dance with young men whom they knew to be bad. And not only dance, but heap attention upon them. They were ignorant of these men's reputation? Not so ; they knew it better than I did. It is quite noticeable, that a girl who has regard for herself, is not troubled by any attention from such infamous blackguards. So when I see a girl knowingly associate with the filth of society, I conclude she is not to be estimated very highly. And what has been to me a subject of no small wonder, is that the parents think the daughter is all right ; but they are very anxious for the son. Is it because they want to rid themselves of the daughter at any cost ? To have her married and off their hands ? From the actions of some parents, there appears to be more truth than fiction in these remarks : the future of the daughter is not much considered ; the life which she is leading is of no importance to the parents—so long as public disgrace does not result. Yea ; but how often does not the shame become known ? How many a noble girl is leading a life of sin ? Once she blushed at the thought. Death the most painful, but sinless, would be preferable to this life in which all honor, all affection, all virtue is destroyed ! A young man dying on the gallows, is an appalling sight ; but a girl once chaste, once an angel, dying in a house of ill-fame, is a spectacle of woe indescribable, and of affliction without parallel ! Beware, therefore, of bad company ! Avoid

it as you would avoid the fangs of a serpent. Be not attracted by its charms or its gaiety ; for beneath the charm lurks destruction, and after the gaiety comes sorrow. Be careful, that the good seed sown in your hearts is not choked up by the weeds of sin. Pray earnestly to God, that He may keep you from evil surroundings ; that He may protect you from the temptations of your own heart, and from the seduction of others ; that, when the harvest of your life approaches, He may gather you into His eternal home.

THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY ;
OR, THE
TWENTY-SEVENTH AFTER PENTECOST.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed which a man took and sowed in his field. (Math. xiii.—31.)

My Dear Friends : The Kingdom of Heaven, to which reference is here made, is, as you know, the kingdom of God on earth ; or, in other words, the Catholic Church. Our Divine Lord is the one who sowed the mustard-seed, the Church. He gave to St. Peter and his successors the care of the tree ; but so that no one, at any time, could question the legitimacy of their authority, He declared : *I shall send you the Holy Ghost, Who will teach you how to nourish the tree, and I shall abide with you forever.* This tree developed from the seed, together with the commission given the apostles by our divine Saviour, is a symbol of the unity of the Catholic Church. The branches have spread themselves over the whole world ; yet they all belong to the trunk or body of the same tree. Go where you will, in time or place, you will find the Catholic Church teaching the same doctrine, believing the same faith, and adhering to the same traditions. Some branches, it is true, have been lopped off the

tree. The people whom these fallen branches represent, maintain they constitute the true Church. Let them trace their history to its origin ; then they will discover the tree from which they separated, and to which they now have no attachment. As every branch retains some characteristic qualities of the parent tree ; so with the different branches detached from the old Church—they have some distinguishing marks indicative of Christianity.

This tree was planted by the Saviour of the world in the morning of the Christian era. It was fertilized by the blood of martyrs and consecrated by the lives of saints. In its branches the great and the lowly, the learned and illiterate, have found safety from the storms of doubt and infidelity, which have often swept the world. The scholars of every age have drawn inspiration from its influence ; the king and the beggar have partaken of its benign protection ; and all have rested under its shade, in the peaceful repose of religious tranquillity.

We now purpose to speak to you of the unity of that Church figuratively represented as the mustard-tree. This unity is one of the notable marks which distinguish the Catholic Church from the many sects of Christianity. She has preserved her unity from the beginning until this day, and will until the cross appears again to judge the living and the dead. Being commissioned by the Son of God, she could not do otherwise ; for truth is the same now that it ever was, and must remain unchangeable.

“The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things” (St. John xiv. —26.), says her divine Master. *“And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.”* (St. Math.

xxviii.—20.) Since the Holy Ghost taught her all truth and continues to teach her, she must be the repository of that truth. To her you must look for the immutable doctrines of Christianity. From her, too, you must learn them, for she is the teacher and guide, “*Go forth and teach all nations.*” But it may be retorted: ‘The Catholic Church was once the true Church; she erred, however; and the power imparted to her has been recalled. The Jews were once the chosen people of God; but they abused the high prerogatives bestowed upon them, and consequently, the Gospel passed from them to the Gentiles. In a similar manner the Catholic Church sank into superstition and idolatry; and as God could not countenance such error and abomination, he withdrew His pledges: hence the Reformation was the instrument used by Him to rehabilitate society. The Holy Ghost taught her truth, we admit; but she, in turn, did not fulfil her task as teacher; she had the truth, but kept the children of God in ignorance.’ Pause a moment, my friends. Did not Jesus say: “*Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*”? How is it possible for the Son of God to associate Himself with falsehood? If the Church has erred, this He has done. Did He not foresee the life of the Church? To say He did not, is to say He is not God. No Christian can presume to make use of such blasphemy. He saw the future; He saw the condition of the Church from the moment of its establishment until time will commingle with eternity. But He said He would be with His Church forever; and where He is, error cannot be. Therefore the Old Church was not superseded by the Reformation; nor is the comparison between her and the Jewish religion consistent; for God never promised He would be with the latter unceasingly.

Unity, that wonderful trait of the Church's character, is not found in any human organization. Martin Luther, the first of moderns to renounce his allegiance to the Old Church, said : " Come, I shall show you the way of salvation. The Church is corrupt. I shall lead you from its destroying influence to the living waters of life. I shall make life easier for you. I shall not only give you freedom of expression, but I shall also grant you a license for the indulgence of your passions. I being the pope of the new order of religious sentiment, shall set the example. I hereby cast aside my vows, and will marry. The one whom I have chosen to be my partner in the modern dispensation, also ignores her vows. Henceforth it will be known to all men that a monk and a nun are your guides ; and in order that we may work in harmony, we will be man and wife." But he had hardly finished speaking, when a voice was heard from merry England. Things did not work pleasingly for Henry, so he declared himself to be another pope, and set his people both an admirable and pious example by discarding his virtuous queen and marrying another woman ! Shining lights, these new expounders of the word of God ! Magnanimous in their example as well as godly in the worship of their own opinions !

Pretty soon there were others who deemed themselves worthy to divide the honors with Martin Luther and Henry VIII. Catching the spirit of insubordination, they arose ; and ere long hundreds were preaching salvation in new forms to their fellows, and destruction to those who refused to be their disciples. Now all these entertained different views of religion, and everyone spoke according to his views. That they differed, is evident ; for had they no difference, they would all be

in one faith ; but they were not, as the testimony of their own mouths declares. Luther taught not the doctrine of Henry. Calvin disagreed with both. Thus everyone differed with every other one. Was this unity? Let yourselves answer. But truth is one. It is not subject to decay or change. Moreover, our Divine Lord never said to Luther, Henry, Calvin, or Wesley, and a host of other so-called reformers, "*I shall be with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*"

The unity of the Church, so marvellous in its nature as well as perpetual in its endurance, should induce every rational creature to think. It is one of the most ponderous proofs of the divine origin, mission, and destiny. To see such unbroken adhesion to faith in every age and nation, when everything else suffered disintegration, is, to say the least, wonderful. Schools of philosophy and of science, systems of government and of religion, have been repeatedly changed ; one school or system arising on the ruins of another ; each one maintaining its own excellence above all competitors ; all supported by considerable scholarship and genius. But time has plucked the laurels from the brows of their advocates and admirers. Old systems are forgotten ; or, if remembered at all, they are only known by a few who study their principles in order to know their defects or to apply what may be beneficial in them. Various systems of natural and metaphysical science have attracted the attention of the world. They rose, flourished, and departed. Monarchs swaying the decisions of nations, inflicting ruin and desolation, dictating their will to other powers, have been swallowed up in the gulch of oblivion. Opinions have changed, crowns have fallen, thrones have tottered, the map of Europe has been repeatedly changed, but

the unity of the Church remains undisturbed.

In comparing Protestantism to Catholicity, Mr. Guizot, a historian of France, notes the weight of this argument based upon the unity of the Church, and attempts to obviate its force by observing the difference in ecclesiastical government: "People have not known," he says, "how to reconcile the rights and necessities of tradition with liberty; and the cause of it has undoubtedly been, that the Reformation did not fully understand and accept either its principles or its effects." Now we inquire, what must Protestantism be when it does not understand its own principles and effects?

A Catholic could have expressed neither a more formal nor a more cogent condemnation of Protestantism than did Mr. Guizot. The Reformation which has, we are told, so illuminated the minds of men; which has dragged, from the depths of ignorance, so many millions of human creatures; which has unshackled the intellect and given freedom to mankind; that it did not know its principles and effects, is strange indeed. Can society, after such a declaration, confide its temporal welfare and eternal destiny to that establishment called the Reformation? But Mr. Guizot continues: "Thence arises a certain air of inconsistency and narrowness of spirit which has often given advantages over it to its opponent (the Catholic Church). The latter knew very well what they did and what they wished. They ascended to the principles of their conduct, and avowed all their consequences. There never was a government more consistent, more systematic, than the Church of Rome."

Instead of inconsistency and narrowness of spirit, which Mr. Guizot, a Protestant, ascribes to Protestant-

ism, we would expect from the great Reformation harmony in principles and magnanimity in action. But the Catholic Church knew very well, says Guizot, what she did and what she wished. To be sure she did ; for previous to the Reformation she had fifteen centuries of experience. She ought to know, especially since the Holy Ghost protected her from error and the Son of God was on board her barque. Let him tell us what was the origin of the Church of Rome ? What made her so consistent and systematic in her government ? What saved her from the restless elements of dissolution, so innate in the minds of men ? Other societies, both political and religious, have experienced the destroying hand of time as well as the inconsistency of human things. The Church, however, continued her divine course amid the contentions of states ; she has triumphed over the most bitter controversies, and has survived the downfall of empires ; she has had, and still has, enemies the most implacable, whose mighty power was only equalled by their deadly hatred. Yet from their maliciousness and from the potent vicissitudes of ages, she has come forth united in faith, consistent in doctrine, systematic in her government, and untarnished in luster.

We challenge our adversaries to demonstrate this phenomenon on any other basis or hypothesis than that of her divine origin. There is not anything in the history of knowledge which compares with her unrivalled unity. The Catholic religion has flourished in nations in war with one another ; though their jealousies clashed, she still remained the ruling queen of their hearts and consciences. Catholics of various nations met and disputed over problems grave in their nature and far-reaching in their consequences ; but after the contention,

they knelt to adore the same God, in the same manner. She has entered the lyceums of knowledge in every land for the purpose of arguing the heated questions of the hour ; she has invited and encouraged discussion upon all themes engaging the attention of the human intellect ; yet she has always maintained her unity. Her children, in every clime, have won the trophies of erudition ; they have disputed among themselves and with others ; they have been rivals of one another ; but after the struggle had passed, they bowed their laurel crowned head to her maternal rules. Notwithstanding human frailty and human ambition, they remained faithful in that unity established by her divine Guide. Search history from the dawn of creation until sunset this evening ; and if you find anywhere so vast a combination of genius in union within one faith, so many nations in submission to the same spiritual authority, so much discussion without a breach in doctrine, you will have made an important discovery, and science will have to attempt to explain a new phenomenon ! Her unity, indeed, can only be explained by the fact that the Son of God is the author of her heaven born system. Assisted by His power, she has come forth from every conflict with victory perched upon her banner, and her brow wreathed with the bays of faith, hope, charity, and justice. As in the past, so in the future, she will continue to teach mankind the truths of religion, embodied in her commission ; and her glory will consist in the number of her saints and martyrs, in the erudition of her children, and the unity of their faith !

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Why stand ye here all the day idle? (St. Math. xx.—6.)

My Dear Friends : Our Divine Lord here represents Himself as a master of a family, who went out at different hours to hire workmen for his vineyard. Even at the eleventh hour, when every willing, healthy man should be at work, He goes out and finds men loafing in the market-place. They were unemployed. No man had hired them. Perhaps they did not want to labor ; or, the job offered them was not suitable. Some of them might be like many in our day, who will not labor unless they obtain a peculiar sort of employment, something agreeable to themselves. They nevertheless accepted the invitation extended to them by the Master ; and when evening had come, they received as much reward as the others who had borne the burden of the day and the heat. Now this appears, at first thought, to be unjust ; yet you must not forget that the last laborers might have exerted themselves to the extreme limits of their energies. In the time during which they toiled, they might have applied themselves with all their strength, zeal, and willingness. They would thus show their good intention, and give to the Master proof of their desire to do all in their power. The manner in which they worked, the readiness with

which they accepted the invitation, was undoubtedly pleasing to the Master, who rewarded them equally with the first. The Master, moreover, did no injustice ; for He gave to everyone according to the agreement.

Now you need not be told that many commentators on the Scriptures understand the vineyard to be the Church ; and the market-place, the world. Some persons enter the Church at an advanced age ; others are born within its fold ; but the former may be more zealous, may see with a keener eye the beauties of the Church, may admire with a more profound devotion the exhaustless fountains of grace therein contained, and may apply these magnificent means of salvation to their own souls with more ardor and gratitude than the Catholic whose infancy was blessed by the waters of regeneration. This one's labor is greater ; that one's merit. It is merit, not the labor, which receives the reward. It will also be admitted that not a few Catholics living and dying in the Church, do not deserve the reward due to a single hour of earnest Christian effort.

May not your Lord and Master say to many Catholics : "*Why stand ye here all the day idle ?*" Yea ; He may even demand of them : "*Why stand ye here all the days and months and years of your life, idle ?*" And they cannot reply, "*No man has hired us*" ; for they are already hired ; but they are idle, unprofitable servants. They have plenty to do, still they do it not. They are lazy in the affairs of their eternal salvation. They have not the heart, the willingness to labor. They must be goaded on. They are not cheerful in doing good works. They are not filled with the spirit of love in the performance of their religious duties. Instead of striving to excel from day to day, they are

content in the indifferent, lifeless way in which they live. Activity, enterprise, and energy may be their characteristics in the other pursuits of life; but in religion, they seem like one sick and without ambition. If they hear Mass on Sunday in a very questionable frame of mind, this act of devotion to God is sufficient. Indeed, we may draw from their conduct the inference, that a great favor has been bestowed upon God by the performance of the obligation mentioned. Instead of that soul-pervading spirit, that religious impetus to do all in their power to accomplish the grand end of their creation, they are all the day idle! Are we? Let us put the question to ourselves. Are we ardently engaged in the Master's vineyard? Are we unrelenting in our daily pious exercises? Are we permeated with a glowing love for our Creator, and a desire to do His holy will? In the eternal interests of others, do we manifest that zeal indispensable to faithful workers in the vineyard of the Lord? Do we set an edifying example? do we discountenance the rude, the vulgar, the licentious? or even reprimand them, when we can? Are we as zealous in saving souls, as we are in making money? If one cares for himself, he may think this enough; but it is not enough. When and where he can, he should exert himself by word and example to bring others to God. Let him weigh the cost of a soul—as far as possible estimate the worth of a soul as this priceless being appears to God; and then labor to save at least one soul besides his own. One of the great causes of indifference in spiritual matters, is that we do not sufficiently dwell upon religion, its sincere practice and its aims.

Although Our Lord accused some of idleness, may He not condemn others for being worse than idle? What of those persons who, instead of doing good, are

incessantly engaged in doing evil? What of those who, instead of prayer, use the wonderful faculty of speech which God has so benignly given them, to utter the foulest language? Not satisfied by degrading themselves, they seek to degrade and destroy others. In every den of iniquity they saturate themselves with vice and crime; and then in their madness seduce others to enter the thorny, precipitous way to hell. And such, sometimes Catholics! Catholics purified in the saving waters of Baptism! Catholics cleansed so often in early life, from sin in the grace-giving Sacrament of Penance! Catholics happy once, after Holy Communion, with their Divine Lord in their bosoms! Catholics blessed in so many ways, now defiled, now boasting of their wickedness, now exulting in the number of their victims! Alas! they are immensurably worse than idle. Would that they were dead beyond the reach of further harm to themselves or destruction to others. Such were called into the vineyard; but bad company, temptation, or their own perverseness, has led them from the abode of innocence and peace. There are many other Catholics, though not addicted to those awful sins which destroy while they fascinate, are yet in no wise profitably engaged. They, too, are worse than idle. Of those we shall not now speak, but shall devote a few moments to those who are studious laborers in the Master's vineyard.

In the first place, let us examine the sentence, "*Many are called, but few are chosen.*" According to some doctors of the Church, it is supposed that those who are not chosen, are damned. Others maintain that the expression signifies that all are called to a life of grace; but only a few attain to perfection—only a few

embrace the religious life and observe the evangelical counsels. But now, should our Divine Lord in person address you, saying : “ *Come into My vineyard. Why are you idle when there is so much to be done ? Come, labor for Me, and I shall give you eternal life.* ” Could you resist the invitation ? Would you turn away from Him and say : “ Next week, or next month ; or, I am yet young, and wish to taste of the pleasures of this world. After this I shall comply. ” Oh, no ; you would be fascinated by His goodness and delighted by His appeal. Still you seem forgetful that your Lord and Master is constantly exhorting you, through His Church, to come to Him ; yet how few listen, and fewer yet accept the heaven-born inspiration.

In serving God, you must be heart and soul in your efforts. You must bear the burdens of the day and the heats. In leading a Christian life, your hearts must be submissive. These are maxims—divine utterances, essential to you. These beautiful sayings of our Saviour must be observed : “ *Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.* ” “ *Love those who hate you ; do good to those who despise you ; pray for those who speak evil against you.* ” “ *Take up your cross and follow Me,* ” with many another sublime expression from the lips of Jesus Himself. Will you be free from trials in His service ? By no means. Affliction will come. Adversity will strike you cruel blows. Sorrow may haunt you. All the ills of life may combine to vent their fury upon you ; but Jesus is with you. These will draw you closer to Him, and make Him and you better friends ; and when the storm is the darkest He will quiet your fears and pour the solace of His love into your troubled hearts. While your journey through life will be marked by trouble, still there

will be a sweetness in your sufferings which will fill the heart often with placid joy, just as the balmy air of spring expands the heart by its magic influence and expels all thoughts of the fierce winter storms. Compare the state of your mind with that of those who persist in a reckless, sinful career ; and you will easily perceive that your troubles are joys : for your Heavenly Master is your support, while a cancerous conscience, a remorseful heart, and the Infernal One whom the sinner has served, torture him night and day.

Begin early in life to love God. Grow not wearisome in doing good. Let your highest ambition be to toil arduously in the Lord's vineyard. Let your hearts be so brimful of heavenly aspiration, that you will ever rejoice in seeing others obeying God's law, and in doing all in your power to influence your associates to avoid bad company. Make use of early life ; consecrate yourselves to God's service ; offer every thought, word, and action to Him ; and learn also from the following words of the poet, not to squander the time given you for noble purposes :

“O Man ! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time !
Misspending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime !
Alternate follies take the sway,
Licentious passions burn ;
Which tenfold force give Nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.”—*Burns.*

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Now the parable is this : The seed is the word of God.
(St. Luke viii.—11.)

My Dear Friends : Our Saviour explains this parable of the sower and the seed so completely as to leave no doubt of its signification. The seed is the word of God. Some falls by the wayside, and is trampled under foot. There is no regard for it. The devil, of course, hates the words of divine wisdom, and plucks them out before they have even taken root. Some falls upon the rocks. There is no moisture ; there is no heavenly inspired desire to cherish the seed, and it withers away. Some falls upon thorns. These outgrow the seed. There is more solicitude for their growth than for the word of God. The word which leads to eternal life is neglected for the cares and the riches and pleasures of temporal life. A portion of the seed, however, falls upon good ground, and brings forth fruit a hundred-fold. The patient, docile heart listens to the word of God, nourishes it in the fertility of a Christian soul, with the result of spiritual advancement for himself and others.

Now, we may inquire which of these four classes is the happiest ? Which can be the happiest ? Every sane person must reply the fourth ; that is, those who

preserve the sacred word of God in their hearts ; because the more closely we are united to God, the source of all bliss, the more happy we are ; just as the nearer we approach the sun, the more we are effected by its heat. Why, indeed, so many of the human race disregard the teachings of the Eternal Lawgiver, is a problem difficult to comprehend. The farther they depart from Him, the more miserable they become. In their woes, there is little consolation for them. They have abandoned the invigorating rays of heaven. When old age comes upon them, whither will they look for solace ? and when the grave yearns to receive them, where will be the star of their hope ? If there is a struggle in the death of the just, who can depict the despair of the unrepentant sinner ?

How many of our Protestant friends may be compared to the wayside upon which the seed fell ! They hear often much about the Catholic Church. At their leisure, they will examine her claims. They will give her an impartial hearing before the tribunal of their private judgment. In all sincerity, I believe they mean well ; but ere the examination, such as it may be, is considered, the prejudice or bigotry of pamphlets read or of fanatical ministers heard, pluck the thought from their minds, and the investigation is never begun. Had the research not been postponed ; had unbiased reason, with her lamp filled even from Nature's source, been permitted to examine the mooted questions, how many Protestants would think better of the Church ; nay, how many converts would there not be for the Church of Christ ! The seed is plucked out, lest believing, they may be saved. Indeed, we may add, without fear of doing injustice to anyone, that bad Catholics are often the ones who tear out the word of God from

many a heart. Their shameful excesses, their corrupting behavior, their disregard for the teachings of their Church, sometimes induce Protestants to imagine that the Catholic faith is the parent of such abominable disorders.

The rocks upon which the seed barely germinated, may suggest to us those Catholics to whom we have already referred. They have received the word of God with joy. As children, they rejoiced in the blessings of an innocent life. But, alas! how the character of the heart has changed. The frosts of temptation blew upon the seed. Where all was once so fair, now the blight of sin has blasted every lovely virtue, every great-souled inspiration! Where angels loved to hover, now the dark mantle of iniquity hangs like a pall over the death-chamber of many an exalted aspiration! Deplorable it is to see Catholics sinking into the abyss of wickedness; and what is worse, maintaining those dives of drunkenness where those who enter leave innocence behind! They receive the word with joy; but their joys are transformed into ruination for themselves and the unwary.

The seed also fell among thorns. It was choked by the weeds. Here you can easily perceive a struggle. An effort is made; yet it is too feeble, and the seed brings forth no fruit. Every nerve might have been strained for a time, so that the seed might not fail. The Sacrament of Penance was approached with a contrite heart; the bread of angels was received to nourish the word therein mystically veiled; but the desire of riches and pleasures, the engrossing cares of life—all were too much for a person with a strong inclination for the vile, though he might have entertained some relish for the good and the pure. What was the outcome? No less a person than Christ the Saviour has told you

that the thorns of care and pleasure and riches suffocated the word, which is to those who preserve it, a pledge of endless felicity. The thorns of life are often preferred to the roses of innocent tranquillity. The eternal word is weighed against the weeds of avarice and lasciviouness and intemperance, and the weeds preponderate. Often, indeed, the word of God is not a feather in the balance. A choice is instituted between Jesus and the robber of temporal and eternal joys ; and like the Jews, the preference is for the robber. Would that Catholics reflected upon the enormity of their transgressions, and the awful consequences thereof !

Why do not Catholics ponder well in their hearts, the word of God, and be directed by its salutary suggestions ? To this question it may be answered that in many cases they have no relish for anything or any person that would restrain them from the inevitable destruction which awaits them. They have eyes, but they see not ; ears, and they hear not ; intellects, still they do not understand. Sin has blinded their eyes and made deaf their ears to the teachings of Christ. The intellect is blunted, while the pure, elevating emotions of the heart are poisoned by the cravings for the filthy and the lecherous. If they attend Mass, they never hear a sermon. This is avoided by hearing an early Mass, only to spend the remainder of the day in debauchery. Were this class of Catholics to listen to a sermon occasionally, they would derive much spiritual benefit therefrom. The seed of the word of God may find an entrance into their souls and fructify. They may pause, and in their meditation resolve to abandon forever those haunts which bring them no good. In this manner, they would nurture the word of God in their

hearts. It would stimulate them to devotion, and devotion would draw them nearer to their God.

Still, it is very painful to think of the number of Catholics who do listen to sermons, yet imbibe no good therefrom. The admonitions are always for somebody else. They seldom take them to themselves. If, however, the remark fits them as closely as a plaster of Paris jacket does a patient, then they are fired with bitterness toward the priest who has dared to be so bold. In fact, the priest may not know of their excesses, and consequently never intended the sermon to be more than an exhortation against sin. His comments flow as naturally from the Gospel as water from a fountain ; but since water washes away the dirt it meets, so the words of the priest collide with the dross of polluted hearts. The priest who labors unremittingly to expel immorality and drunkenness from his congregation, is one who will be paid by bitter censure and unkind invectives. He is nevertheless the sower. He must be dauntless ; and in the end his enemies will praise his zealousness ; yes, even pray for him, for they find him their friend.

Others will take the sermon as a subject for afternoon gossip. It was such a delightful discourse. How eloquent in delivery ! How masterful in the treatment of the subject ! How broad and liberal in its comprehension ! Really, I could sit and listen to such a sermon for hours. But how such a person's ears must have tingled ? I would have been so ashamed, I could not have sat there. I venture to say the sermon was meant for him, and indeed he could have taken every word to himself. I wonder how the priest found it all out. Somebody must have told him all. Well, it is a good thing. In this manner the talk goes on. But do

they take the lessons contained in the sermon to themselves? Oh, no; they are beyond criticism of every sort. But is this gossip charitable? Is this what the Catholic Church teaches them? What good have these slanderers obtained from the sermon or from assisting at the adorable sacrifice of the Mass? Are they not, alas! blinded to their own best interests and those grand precepts taught by the Son of God?

We are happy, however, to know that many there are who make the word of God the rule of their lives. They do not hear to forget or disregard, but to comply with the teachings of the Church. These bring forth fruit a hundredfold, in patience. The dark, rolling clouds of trouble may gather around them; still from beyond the tempest they know that God is looking down upon them, that He will protect them by His almighty arm. The clouds break, and the horizon of the future once more is serene. From the storm they have gathered strength. Gratitude fills their hearts for the protection given them. In every-day life they are practical Catholics. In all their transactions they are governed by the will of heaven. They draw lessons of wisdom from the things around them, and in all the manifestations of Nature, they behold signs of a benevolent Creator. They are faithful Catholics, and by this fidelity they are elevated to a contemplation of human existence and the goodness of God. From this contemplation they derive solace in adversity and confidence in the Almighty. In this manner they nourish the seed of the word of God; they produce an abundance of fruit, and they die the death of the just.

Let us learn a lesson to-day from the Gospel. Our Lord spoke thus, that all generations may take heed. We should not only approve of His teachings, but also

lay them up in our hearts ; making them the criterion of our conduct, so that we, too, may bring forth fruit a hundredfold.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Then Jesus took unto Himself the twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished, which were written by the prophets, concerning the Son of Man. (Luke xviii.—31.)

My Dear Friends: Our holy Mother the Church places before our minds this morning, a very useful subject for our consideration. Jesus invites the apostles to accompany Him to Jerusalem. In the past, they had been witnesses of His prodigious works; they were soon to behold the awful tragedy of His passion and death. He wishes them present, that they may see the things about to be accomplished, and afterward to publish to all mankind the things which they saw. His religion was not to die with Himself, but survive Him; hence it was indispensable to have witnesses of His acts—persons who would promulgate to the world the things which they saw and heard. The apostles were ignorant of the terrible acts about to transpire. Before long, however, they realized the mournful truth: “*He shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon and put to death.*”

Let me invite you, my dear friends, now, almost on the eve of Ash-Wednesday, to meditate upon our duty during the holy season of Lent. Let us in thought go up to ancient Jerusalem. What do you behold? Jeru-

salem with all her pristine splendors ; Jerusalem, within whose walls the Jews so often had gathered together in prayer ; Jerusalem, the pride of the Jews and the object of their solicitous care ; Jerusalem, which is now about to be the theatre in which will soon be enacted the awfulest drama in the history of human affairs ! We see a little group enter one of the gates. It is Jesus and His apostles. We feel like prostrating ourselves before His adorable person, but fear to make so bold. There are the doctors of the law and Herod and Caiphas and Pilate. We peer into the judgment hall, where the sentence will be pronounced which will astonish heaven itself. Overawed by these recollections crowding upon you, you ask : “ For what is all this ? ” You need not be told that all these scenes recurring to your imagination, find their reality in the life and death of Christ ; and the merits of that life and death you should apply to your own souls.

There is a Jerusalem beyond the grave—your heavenly home—for the possession of which you should strive. Your Lord said to His apostles : “ *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.*” “ *Come to My Jerusalem, come where there is no pain ; you shall not be mocked or scourged or spit upon ; nor shall you here know death.* Will you accept the invitation ? Yes ! everyone exclaims. But you must remember that the way thereto is steep and rugged. Efforts—stern, uncompromising efforts are demanded of all those who will reach this home of endless happiness. How did Jesus throw open the portals of these eternal mansions of joy ? By climbing Calvary with His cross and dying an ignominious death thereon. Should you attain to those heavenly raptures prepared for the just, you, too, must take up your cross and bear it bravely until you have reached the summit of

your years on earth. How will you accomplish this feat? The way is simple enough in itself, yet arduous; but the heat and the burden will be much diminished, if you be friends of your merciful Redeemer. Everyone wishes to be His friend. He is so deserving of your friendship, so watchful of you, so desirous for both your temporal and eternal interests, that you cannot refuse to be His friends. Still, it must not be overlooked, that the permanency of such friendship requires an incessant struggle. Enemies are on all sides of you. Nay, more; you are not seldom your own most bitter enemies. The world, with its allurements, must be avoided; the devil must be conquered; yourselves must be subdued. All this is no easy task. The blandishments of the wicked are to be shunned; the temptations of hell must be overcome; your own follies, together with your low propensities, are to be banished; and instead of these things you must cultivate a love for everything morally high, ennobling, and sublime. The way to heaven is arduous, we have intimated; thorns are strewn there; but roses are there, too. It is the truly great who are found therein—the honest and the truthful, the noble-souled and faithful. Were one to make an intelligent choice, it is here he would wish to be found, with no shame upon his brow nor malice in his heart, rather than among the vile, the lecherous, and the polluted.

But having made the selection of the way to the paradise beyond the grave, how will you persist in your resolution? The holy season into which you are about to enter will teach you what are requisite for the journey. It will be a training which, if properly observed, will impart a discipline which will be a lamp to your understanding, a guide to your poor bruised feet,

and an angel directing your emotions. The meditation suggested by Lent, the devotion of the Way of the Cross, alms, prayer, and fasting, all purify the soul, while they exalt it to an affectionate contemplation of the passion, death, and love of the Son of God. From a devout consideration of all the mercies of Jesus toward the human race, will arise a nobleness of thought, a loftiness of aspiration, a purity of intention, which will lift you above yourselves, and anchor your affections in the bosom of your Saviour.

Where can you find a better means for self-discipline than in fasting? It trains you to suppress your appetites. The cravings for luxury and abundance are suppressed; and instead of catering to their whims, you give to Nature little where much is demanded. You thus become masters of yourselves. The denials are not such as to endanger health; but, on the contrary, they bestow strength of character, as well as restraint of animal desires. An effort entailing sacrifice is required; still, as all worthy sacrifices have an inestimable reward, so with fasting. It makes you feel how weak and frail you are, how much you are depending upon God's bounty, and conduces you to look with pity upon the frailty of others. While it humbles you in this manner, it only bids you think of your own lowliness, of your own poverty of body and mind. You form thereby a true estimate of yourselves, as well as a higher idea of others; you are in this manner cementing the foundations upon which you can erect a permanent structure of charitable works and intellectual achievements. You also obtain control of yourselves; you weed out vice and sin, while you sow the seeds of virtue, and merit the gifts of grace. In fine, the greatest proof for the efficacy of fasting, is in the example

of Jesus Himself. Did He know it would be injurious to mankind, do you think He would ever have given you such a precedent for imitation. It was not for Himself He fasted, but to teach you a lesson of its usefulness, and of the nobleness which self-abnegation imparts.

Though the Scriptures abound with proofs of the merit and excellence of fasting, and reason concurs in admitting its beneficent fruits, it is only our intention to merely recall to your minds, at this time, its wonderful efficacy, so that you may ponder, at your leisure, upon the vast scope which it embraces. Having, therefore, intimated the practice and its benefits, we shall devote a few thoughts to almsgiving.

To give alms is, indeed, a praiseworthy act of charity. It is of a twofold benefit: it helps the recipient and blesses the giver. By giving to the needy, man becomes a benefactor of God: "*As long as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it to Me.*" (St. Math. xxv.—40.) Your astonishment at these words of your Lord and Saviour must increase when you sufficiently weigh their importance, for from these words we conclude that he who refuses assistance to the poor, refuses the God of the poor; and he who refuses God, may in the time of distress, look in vain to Him for help. Why, then, not assist the needy? Why should some starve or suffer the pangs of hunger, when others are burdened with wealth? Is not man only the steward of his opulence, the possessor for a few years? Will he deny to his fellow-man, in days of need, a helping hand, yet expect that God will pardon the narrowness of his flinty heart? "*He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings.*" (2 Cor. ix.—6.) We may add that he who sows nothing, will reap nothing.

The stingy will be rewarded according to the measure meted out by him. His grasping and hoarding will poison the fountain of magnanimous emotion in his niggardly heart. In his store of wealth he will expect to find comfort, but he will only find wretchedness and sorrow. The one who gives with as generous a heart as his purse allows, will reap the blessings of the poor and the benedictions of heaven.

Almsgiving bestows upon the donor fervent impulses, which help him to a closer union with heaven. His soul is filled with inexpressible satisfaction and tranquillity; his heart beats in sympathy with the unfortunate and the hungry. The recollections of favors bestowed, as well as the happiness accruing to the assisted, bring him blessings indescribable. He is laying up treasures where the moth or the rust will not devour, but where he will receive incalculable usury on his investment. Everyone, consequently, should give, during this season of Lent, what alms he is able. Such will be a very meritorious work: it will blot out many of his transgressions, and will render others happy. He will have their prayers. Upon his death-bed, the remembrance of his charitable acts will be a solace to him; and the angel of charity will wipe away the cold, clammy sweat from his noble forehead.

Let us now dwell briefly upon that sublime exercise—the Way of the Cross. During the year, every Catholic should engage often in this very pious devotion. No week should escape in which he does not make the stations; but, if this is true of other seasons of the year, and undoubtedly it is, how much more so at this time. You will be preparing for the glorious feast of the Resurrection. You intend to participate with true Catholic piety, in the festivities of that joyful Sunday; but how can you

have the proper spirit, unless you meditate upon your Lord's journey from Pilate's judgment hall to the sepulchre? Will He grant to those who are indifferent to His passion an exalted appreciation for His magnificent Resurrection? They who have no heart to feel for His sufferings, will not partake of the glories of the feast. It is unnecessary to urge you to participate in this devout exercise, to join the Church throughout the country in her pious prayers—because you are impregnated with a love of the cross and all it teaches. This devotion includes, of course, all which could be said on prayer; for it contains heart-affecting thoughts upon Christ's humiliation, torture, and death. The Way of the Cross assures you of Christ's love for man, awakens loving compassion for your beneficent Redeemer, and draws you nearer Him and His heavenly Jerusalem.

Let us, then, my dear friends, begin Lent in a spirit of true contrition and love—contrition for all our sins, and love for our greatest Benefactor and Friend. We are not ignorant of the significance of our Saviour's words: "*Let us go up to Jerusalem.*" The apostles, at the time, did not interpret His meaning, but by His death these words were made clear to us. We ought, therefore, to listen to the voice of our holy Mother the Church, calling upon us in spirit to go up to Jerusalem for the purpose of meditating upon the wonders which there transpired. By submission to her entreaties, Lent will be for us a time of thoughtful prayer, and a means of replenishing our souls at the fountain of divine grace. In the energetic and benevolent performance of our religious duties of this Lenten season, let us hope to earn for ourselves the blessings of the poor; and at the last moment of our lives, the invitation from our Saviour: "*Come up with Me to the Jerusalem of endless joys.*"

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

Then Jesus said to him : Begone, Satan, for it is written : The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. (Math. iv.—10.)

My Dear Friends : We have here a striking proof of Satan's boldness, together with a forcible manifestation of his malice toward mankind. He assailed heaven ; he conquered Paradise ; now he tempts the Son of God Himself. Exulting in his conquest of Eden, he believed his revenge against heaven and against man was assured. In order that he may accomplish his designs, he has incessantly striven to withdraw the human race from its allegiance to the Creator. "*Like a roaring lion,*" says St. Paul, "*he goes about seeking whom he may devour.*" The greater the servant of God, the greater is his malicious efforts. When a person is in a position to do much good, when by his example or teaching he may conduct many into the service of God, the devil strains every exertion to subdue this righteous servant, that by his fall many others may be lost to God and be enrolled under the banner of hell. In his victory over our first parents, he had, by his subtle flattery, conquered the first of the human race and the most perfect types of mankind. In the person of Jesus, he saw a most extraordinary character. He had heard at the baptism of Jesus, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well*

pleased," but still doubted whether Jesus was the Son of God. To test Him, Satan awaits for what seems to him a favorable opportunity. Our Saviour, after a protracted fast of forty days, is hungry. Then the devil appears, and invites Him to change the stones at His feet into bread, thus relieving His hunger by partaking of the bread so miraculously transformed from stone. "*It is written,*" says our Saviour to him, "*man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*"

The devil, by no means dismayed, renews his temptation. Jesus is taken by him, and set upon the pinnacle of the temple. He bids Our Lord to cast Himself down, flattering Him that angels would protect Him from harm. But Jesus is more than man; and consequently not a victim of Satan's cunningness, as were Adam and Eve and millions of others. Satan next holds out a most tempting offer. He will bestow the world and the glory thereof upon the Creator of them, if falling down, He would adore him. Jesus now manifests His power and authority over Satan. He commands the devil: "*Begone, Satan, for it is written: The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.*" The pride and arrogance of Lucifer were in this instance overthrown. He obeyed the mandate, and departed from Jesus. By his compliance to the command, "*Begone, Satan,*" he acknowledged his own inferiority and the supremacy of the Saviour of mankind. The devil, though damned into hell, adores and serves Almighty God. He adores Him, because he must revere Him as God, the Supreme Ruler; and he serves Him, because he is in hell by divine command, and in obedience to the supreme will.

It is our duty also to adore and serve God ; not from compulsion, but from salutary fear and filial love. He has given us free will ; hence we can adore and serve Him, or refuse Him the homage of our obedience. Yet, if we do not, the day will come when we must serve the term of punishment imposed upon us by Eternal Justice. Indeed, it is not the fear of punishment which ought to compel us to serve the Creator ; but actuated by love the truest and most profound, we should with pleasure obey His will. By obedience toward Him, we perform the noblest duty which is in the power of man to execute. We become not only servants of God, but His children by adoption. To claim to be a child of the Eternal Father, and have that claim allowed, is the grandest privilege bestowed upon man. We are His children because He created us, and there is no power capable of depriving us of such blessed inheritance, except that within the grasp of our own free will. By our own conduct, we remain, after baptism, children of God and heirs to heaven ; or we become imps of Lucifer and victims of hell. God has not been wanting in His holy care for us. In creating man, observe the majesty which He vouchsafed to confer upon him. "*Let us make man,*" says Almighty God, "*according to our own image and likeness.*" Wonder of wonders that God would in such a marvellous way dignify man ! That there would be any comparison between the Creator of heaven and earth—the eternal, self-existing Being and His poor, frail creature—man ! That God, whose immensity is boundless, whose majesty is beyond description, whose glory is equal to His immensity ; that He would deign to impress upon man His image and His likeness ! Should we hesitate to give to such a Benefactor our allegiance and our homage ?

Ought we ever cease praising and thanking Him for so incomparable a favor? With unfaltering love we should obey Him, that by our ready obedience we may give some proof of our high appreciation for this unparalleled beneficence toward the human race.

In order that we may the better understand the kindness of heaven in our behalf, let us institute a comparison. You are aware that the servants of a king or other ruler, consider themselves much honored by being in the special service of their king. As their promotion goes onward, at each step coming closer to their ruler, their gratitude and fidelity increase. Were the king to adopt some of them into his own family, thereby becoming heirs to the kingdom, their joy would know no bounds. In their allegiance to the throne, they would brave every danger, and on every occasion demonstrate their love and attachment to their king. But when the king has bestowed every favor within his power, he falls immensurably short of what the King of kings, Almighty God, has conferred upon you. Could the temporal ruler give you so much as a single faculty of your soul or function of your body? Though you already possess these, he could not so much as put them in healthy operation, were they to become impaired. Ponder well upon the inestimable, the mysterious powers which God has given you, and the feebleness of kings and the meagreness of their grandest gifts; then you will have some conception of God's goodness toward you.

But, how often you find soldiers and statesmen serving with fidelity tyrants who are haughty, unscrupulous, and savage. Soldiers will march bravely to the cannon's mouth, to be shot down in defence of despots. Generals will vie with one another in order that a tyrannical

emperor will smile upon them, or that some greater distinction may be conferred upon them. Even soldiers, whose native land has been pillaged, robbed of its hereditary rights, will rush into the jaws of death in obedience to the tyrant who has trampled upon their rights, impoverished their country, and driven their very parents into exile. How often, on many a bloody field, have not the Irish braved every danger and met death defiantly in defence of the English crown. You know the history of English gratitude toward them. Poland is another among the many examples which can be cited. In the Crimean War, after an awful battle, the Czar visited the hospital. There among the wounded and dying, he addressed a Polander who was suffering intense pain from his many wounds. The Czar endeavored to console him by praising his courage and the fortitude with which he bore his suffering, adding that he proved himself a great soldier, and fell fighting in the noblest cause in which a man could be engaged ; namely, in defence of his country's honor. Whereupon the soldier, striving to raise his head upon his hand, replied : " Alas ! I have no country. I lie struggling in the grasp of death, for you who have plundered my country and destroyed its existence. Were I dying in a struggle for my native land, these wounds would be the highest marks of honor. Yea, had I a thousand lives, they would all be freely given in defence of Poland's flag ! But I die, and the land of my fathers is no more ! "

You remember, or have read, with what bravery the German Catholic soldiers, in the Franco-Prussian War, fought to overthrow the French. What the reward was, you remember. For their sacrifices and indomitable service, they were repaid by persecution. Re-

ligious orders were expelled, Catholic Church property was confiscated, and bishops were imprisoned. Now, does not all this suggest the words of Cardinal Wolsey : " Had I served my God with half the zeal I served my king, He would not in mine old age have left me naked to my enemies."

Now, to serve one's country is the duty of every citizen ; and while all, without exception, approve of such devotion to the nation's banner, yet we insist that everybody is bound by stronger obligations to adore and serve God. The duty we owe our country does not conflict with the duty we owe to heaven. In truth, a firm adherence to God makes people better citizens ; for our allegiance to the Creator widens our comprehension of our civic obligations, adjusts political and religious differences, enlarges our views of just government, stimulates to honesty and justice and patriotism. Moreover, a successful ruler must be a great servant of God. Without God for a guide, there is nothing to direct him in the administration of justice, nothing to restrain him from violating the rights and privileges of his people. Compare Charlemagne with Nero, St. Louis with Napoleon Bonaparte, Leo XIII. with Bismarck, and you will be able to form some notion of the ideas I wish to impress upon you.

All these examples of courage, fidelity, and Christian loyalty serve no other purpose than to awaken in your bosoms a truer devotion to the Lord of all creation. You readily concede that you should adore and serve God ; but on account of temptation and lukewarmness, as well as other causes, you sometimes fail in giving God unalloyed homage and undivided service. In obeying God, you are performing at once a duty indispensable to happiness and spotless nobility. In serving God,

an equilibrium between the reason and the passions is established, the true dignity of nations and individuals are better understood, and the sacred rights of all are secured. Peace, good will, prosperity, honesty ; in a word, everything which makes a people contented, unselfish, and happy, is realized.

Let me now put a question to you. It is an important one. Upon its fulfilment depends misery or joy. It is this : Which will you serve, God or the devil ? You must serve one or the other. Will you follow that which is base and degrading, defiled and defiling ; or that which is innocent and majestic, pure and ennobling ? Will you sink yourselves into debauchery, infamy, and sin ; or raise yourselves by temperance righteousness, and chastity ? Do you choose a prison cell instead of an honorable life ? Do you prefer the dens of iniquity to a happy home ? Do you select hell in preference to heaven ?—then fall down and adore Satan. If, on the contrary, your hope is fertilized by your constancy to God, and your ambition is to serve Him, then with prayer and confidence ever repeat the text of this sermon : “ *Begone, Satan, for it is written : The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.*”

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

And as He was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo! a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. (Math. xvii.—5.)

Mount Tabor, my dear friends, is honored by this august group of distinguished persons who gather on its summit. Never was a spot more favored, except the stable at Bethlehem and the Cross on Calvary. In all the grand assemblies of the world, there is nothing to be compared to this memorable gathering. Royalty with all its equipage, is as nothing in the comparison; and Tabor is clad in a splendor as much surpassing the magnificence of kingly halls, as its size preponderates over the crowns of kings and emperors. Who constitute this sublime group? The Gospel just read to you, gives you their names. They were Peter, James, and John, the Apostles; Moses, Elias, and Jesus. Our Saviour took with Him Peter, James, and John, three poor and unlettered men, to show to the world that He did not depend upon the power or erudition of the great for the promulgation of His doctrine; and that these are not necessary to the acquirement of the eternal splendor of heaven. But His Apostles He wanted with Him to be witnesses of His Transfiguration, to behold

with their own eyes a glimpse of His majesty. He was soon to be crucified—to die an ignominious death upon the cross. In the hour of darkness, in the infamy of the cross, the apostles may doubt His divinity. He now impresses upon their souls a splendor and a sublimity which will never be effaced. The rabble may bind Him in the garden and drag Him to prison as an infamous impostor; Jews may mock Him, scourge Him, and crown Him with thorns,—but the memory of Mount Tabor can never be obliterated. No degradation is so complete, no calumny so subtle or vicious, no death so disgraceful, as to banish the magnificence of that glorious scene !

Moses appears as the representative of the ancient laws; Elias comes as the prince of the prophets. Both testify that this is the Son of God; that He is the embodiment of the law and the prophets,—that it was of Him they prophesied. To intensify this testimony, Jesus was transfigured before them: “*And His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow.*” The Apostles are astounded by the glory of the Son of God and the magnificence of the environments. St. Peter exclaims: “*Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.*”—“*And while He was yet speaking, behold a white cloud overshadowed them; and lo! a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.*” The Eternal Father again declares Him to be His Son, and commands mankind to hear Him. Overawed by the grandeur of the sight, the presence of Moses and Elias, the splendor of the Transfiguration, the appearance of the cloud, and the voice of the Almighty from the heavens, the Apostles are

seized by fear. They are thrilled with admiration and awe by the breath of heaven ; they are confirmed in faith ; they are prepared now to witness the humiliation of Christ, without suffering from scandal or loss of faith.

Now you may say to yourselves : “ Oh, had we been blessed by that grand manifestation of Christ’s power, every doubt would be banished from our souls! We could labor with a greater zeal for the glory of God, and our devotion toward Him could never grow cold. Death itself would be welcome ; no terror would be contained therein ; for it would only be a means of uniting us forever with the consuming object of our affections.” Whatever you may think in your own minds, it is certain that many a one tossed upon the billows of doubt and infidelity would rejoice in that scene. They would thank God with the most glowing fervor for such a sublime privilege ; would become adherents of the Cross ; would glory in being followers of the Crucified. But have you not sufficient evidence to convince the skeptic, though he saw not the glory of Tabor ? Have you not arguments the most convincing and irresistible of Christ’s divinity ? Yea, you, too, have testimony, and to my mind, even more persuasive than the Transfiguration, although an expression of this sort may appear exaggerated. From the universal conduct of man may be drawn proofs of Our Lord’s divinity, which are in their nature incontrovertible, and challenge the admiration of all thinking people ; for in man’s actions we observe him governed by one or more of these motives : the thirst for wealth, the thirst for pleasure, or the thirst for power. From these three impelling motives we shall demonstrate the divinity of Jesus, the Saviour of the world.

The thirst for wealth ! What is it that man will not attempt in order to seize this glittering object of his desires ? The polar snows are no barrier to him ; nor can the torrid heat prevent him ; pestilence terrifies him not ; he will even defy death itself in his burning desire for wealth. In his feverish excitement, no toil is too wearisome, no risk too dangerous, no exposure too exhausting for him. Friendship will be bartèred ; the sacred pledges of honor will be violated ; family ties will be torn asunder, if these only are obstacles to his ambition for opulence ! Honesty is nothing ! Reputation is of no moment ! The rights of others are of no consequence ! Health, contentment, and the charms of home are all to no purpose ; he must have money ! If he cannot get it by fair means, he will obtain it by treachery. He will condemn himself to servitude in prison ; he will even plunge his hands into the blood of his fellow-men for the sake of its acquirement.

Still, in the presence of this feverish craving, amidst these surging masses, you see persons turning aside from the throng and taking the vow of voluntary poverty. Leaving wealth—departing from its lucrative honors—they exile themselves. For what ? Why do they differ from the multitude ? Why bid an everlasting farewell to that for which others sacrifice everything ? Are there any formulas in science which will solve this phenomenon ? Is there any genius who will explain this abandonment upon scientific principles ? Is there a single fact in the nature of things to unravel this mystery ? No ; it cannot be explained except on the hypothesis that Jesus is divine and the Son of the Most High. The religious of both sexes have listened to the command given by Almighty God on Mount Tabor : “ *Hear ye*

Him." These have not only heard Him, but have obeyed his heavenly invitation.

Let us now consider the second great motive prompting man's conduct—the thirst for pleasure. It may be simple amusement of some sort or another ; or it may be an indulgence in the brimming bowl which destroys. In drunkenness some take delight. They hesitate not to wallow in the mire, if their heads only reel under the influence of potent beverage. But the one, universal motive impelling mankind is carnal pleasure. The passion burns in the heart, oftentimes producing a gale which drives men and women, too, from the path of honor into whirlpools of destruction. To satiate this desire, innocence is immolated upon the altar of sinful pleasure. The noblest virtue is sold in the market of lust. The hopes of a promising career are weighed in the balance of passion, and are but a trifle in the scales of carnal desires. Either legitimately or illegitimately, the human race is borne to the goal of sexual pleasures. Some will be hurled along by their unbridled desires, until respect, reputation, and purity are lost. They care not, finally, whether a thousand point the finger of scorn at them. They are unmindful where they exhibit their profligacy. Modesty is for them no more. Chastity is banished from their hearts. The gentle affections of the heart are impoverished, the intellect is robbed of its light, and shame is stamped upon a countenance once beautiful in aspect and innocent in expression. In the abodes of impurity, innocence and health, fortunes and accomplishments are squandered, though a father's heart is breaking and a mother is bent in grief. There is no regard for friends or family affection. Pleasure—carnal pleasure is the one controlling, overmastering motive ! For that they barter

themselves, trample upon everything sacred, disregard the tears and entreaties of parents, spurn the voice of the Church, and defy high heaven! In their headlong course, they care not whether they die in the slums of debauchery or in the hospitals for incurables, or be damned forever to the regions of the vile and the impure. Yet, notwithstanding the prevalence and force of the thirst for pleasure, we behold persons turning aside from the blandishment of life, from the gaiety of society, from the allurements of companions and making the vow of perpetual chastity. Can you explain this strange occurrence? Can you account for the fulfillment of that vow so contrary to human passion? Will the skeptic or infidel produce some philosophical or scientific maxim to controvert this prodigy of human sacrifice? We challenge them to bring forth their contradictory arguments; but they will not—they cannot; the facts are in evidence against them. The only explanation, the only hypothesis which can be assumed, is that Jesus is God; and that His influence over the human heart at this distant day, is as powerful now as His majesty was overawing to the Apostles Peter, James, and John.

We next approach the third motive of human activity—the thirst for power. This desire has caused ruin on earth and war in heaven. The craving for power drove Lucifer from the glories of celestial bliss into the pit of hell. The love of power expelled our first parents from the Garden of Eden. To become like unto God, telling good from evil, was the ambition which plundered their innocence, made exiles of them, and subjected their progeny to misery and death. The wish to be greater than his brother, to be more influential with God, induced Cain to stain his soul with the gentle

blood of his brother. Alexander the Great lamented because his father, Philip of Macedon, was so successful. He will conquer all, thought Alexander, and there will be no victories left for me. Cæsar, too, longed for power and greatness, though they accomplished his ruin. So with all the celebrated conquerors and many renowned statesmen. You know the ambition of Napoleon Bonaparte. His thirst for pre-eminence plundered other nations while it exhausted his own. He dictated treaties, spurned the laws of nations drenched the nations in blood, and in his mad desire for conquest, dragged the venerable Pope Pius VII. from Rome and made him a prisoner. It is not needful, however, to recall these prodigious examples in order to prove the limitless extent of the thirst for power.

You are witnesses of its presence. In our day the thirst for power has become epidemic. The public mind is restless, and surges in its eagerness for potency and popularity. In one hand are held corrupt principles ; in the other, the fairest promises of honesty integrity, and justice. The latter, however, are often only masks disguising dishonesty, faithlessness, and injustice. Ambition for power regards not the undying principles of honor ; despises truth, if truth does not serve better than falsehood ; courts fraud, deception, and treachery, when these assist to the temple of worldly greatness. The burning thirst for fame, distinction, and control converts the honorable into rascals, the honest into rogues, the truthful into liars. There is no compact so sacred, which will not be violated ; no virtue is so exalted, which will not be humbled or silenced ; no tie of friendship so dear, which will not be broken in the reckless desire for power ! Cunningness is called

wisdom ; bribery, generosity ; violated pledges, cleverness ! The victim of this passion resolves to conquer or to perish. He toils day after day in feverish application. Health is nothing, family happiness is nothing. There is not anything which can stay his determined, all-consuming purpose. He exclaims : " I will have power, though the effort costs me health, though I trample upon friends, though I favor the base, the low, and intriguing,—I will have power ! Religion will be no barrier ! The teachings of the Church shall be no restraint ! The welfare of my immortal soul shall be no hindrance ! The glory of my country shall not deter me ! O Power ! everything I will offer at your shrine, if you only crown me one of your elect ! "

Still, notwithstanding that this strife is found in every sphere of human endeavor, notwithstanding its universality, you are aware that many take the vow of entire obedience. They lay down their will at the feet of their superior. In the future, his or her will is to be theirs ; at his or her command, they obey in all things not involving sin. They may be prodigies in the sciences and the arts—in every branch of human attainment they may excel—still they humbly submit to the will of another, although this other may be inferior in everything which goes to make up great natural gifts and vast acquirements. He or she may be of only ordinary ability ; they may be remarkable for their extensive research and matchless genius,—yet they bow down before his commands and acknowledge his guidance.

Again we inquire, is there any facts within the grasp of human knowledge to account for this inexplicable surrender of man's will ? Is there any theory within the entire domain of science to offer a solution for this

problem ? Science is baffled, the sage is confounded ; passion itself is frustrated at the sight of this marvellous renouncement of the human will ! In this perplexity, in this search for a solution, we turn once more to the Transfiguration, and recall again the words : “ *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye Him.* ” It is devotion to Jesus which has drawn them from the avenues of ordinary life and common passion. They have bid adieu to society, to the allurements of fame and the attractions of popularity, for the thorn-crowned Son of Man. In the divinity of Christ is found the reason of these phenomena ; and to me they are more persuasive than the Transfiguration : for they are more prolonged in their duration ; are visible to an infinitely greater number of witnesses, and are beheld in wonderment in this our own time.

These are arguments that are incontestable. There is no other explanation for the taking of the three vows of voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and entire obedience. But while we as Catholics profess the divinity of Jesus ; while we expect no proofs—nor do we want them—still, why do we not conform our lives more and more to the doctrines of Jesus ? To believe will not save us ; nor will it do to be good Catholics for an hour on Sunday and during the remainder of the week break God’s laws. It will not do to praise God with our lips, while our hearts are far from Him. Let us, therefore, during this holy season of Lent, mortify ourselves, that we also may be masters of our passions. Let us entreat the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Jesus, that she may supplicate her Son to assist us in our efforts toward perfection.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

But some of them said : He casteth out devils, by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. (St. Luke xi.—15.)

My Dear Friends : The malice of slander is fiercely depicted by this remark of the Jews. They were envious of the marvellous power of our Divine Saviour, and sought to disparage it by attributing it to the influence of the prince of hell. The people admired, but these attempted to poison the admiration. The Jews were armed with audacity ; yet their weapon was insufficient either to dismay Our Lord or to ward off the incontestable reply : “ *And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand ?* ” In other words, He said to them : Is it not incredulous that Satan should war against himself ? But if he assist Me in expelling devils, he wars against himself ; hence devils attack devils, which is absurd. The infernal legions are united in their war against man ; and for Satan to expel one of them from a human being, for the purpose of proving the strength of his adversary, Jesus Christ, is ridiculous. The Jews, no doubt, felt the poignancy of the rebuke administered by Our Lord. Indeed, had they not been so malicious, they would have probably foreseen the folly of making so unguarded an assault. Thus it ever is with slanderers, detractors, and calumniators. They destroy themselves usually by

the venom of their own bite. They intend injury, still they injure none more than themselves. They render themselves despicable even to those who flatter them. They are a pest in every congregation ; they are the enemies of charity and justice ; they are the cause of many a bitter contention. Many a reputation is blighted by the foulness of their aspersions. The innocent are made guilty ; the unfortunate are assailed without mercy ; and no one is so secured as to escape the shafts of their rancor. In return, what is the reward of the slanderer ? He is the prey of his own envious, ungenerous heart ; despised and shunned, and oftentimes hated.

To curb slander or to rebuke the slanderer, is a difficult task ; for slander is so prevalent, that one knows not where to begin ; and the slanderer, of course, holds himself or herself entirely innocent, or exceedingly abused. While their conversion to principles of human decency is in no way easy, still the greater difficulty is met in having them make reparation. Since they sin against charity, and often entertain no regard for the justice due their neighbor, they not only sin, but are obliged to make restitution. Since they are always well informed upon the scandalous topics of the town and surrounding country, they are sought out by the inquisitive, or they gad from house to house, unloading themselves of the latest item of malicious news. The slanderer is very courteous, but this dissembling courtesy corrupts while it tickles the inquisitive. " Did you hear so and so about Mrs. A. ? " Mrs. B. will inquire. " Not a word. "—" Why, it is very strange you did not learn anything about her. The story is all around town. It is really shocking. Even the school children are talking about her. It is on the tip of everyone's

tongue. I do not know where she will stop.”—“Well, tell us all about it,” says Mrs. C. ; “we haven’t heard a single word.” The scandal-monger apparently hesitates. She declares with solemn precaution, that she does not want to say a word about anybody ; but Mrs. A. “ought to be ashamed of herself.” Her listeners urge her to go on with the story—just what Mrs. B. wants. Then she begins by saying : “I shall just tell you as I heard it. I don’t know whether it is true or not. Indeed, I hope it isn’t.” She then relates the whole episode, with all the increments and additions which a slanderous tongue can so deftly weave around an incident. It is only a rumor, the scandal-monger says ; yet there is no doubt in regard to the injury done to Mrs. A’s reputation. Positive harm is done, and restitution must be made. “But I told it just as I heard it.” No matter ; you are bound to make reparation. Why should you publish something injurious to another ? What right have you to asperse the character of anybody ? You do not know it is true ; why, then, use it as an instrument of damage against your neighbor ? If the persons to whom you speak are ignorant of the story, you lessen their opinion of another’s worth ; and they, in turn, spread the pernicious report. Because you have thus injured somebody, you must repair the wrong inflicted, you must make satisfaction to the one slandered. This is simply justice to your neighbor. But should you know that of which you speak to be true, still it is only known to you or to a few, charity requires that you remain silent ; and if you offend in this, you violate the precept of charity, and thereby sin mortally or venially, according to the nature of the case. If the scandal is public and true, the author or cause thereof forfeits his reputation, and is entitled to no further indulgence.

You will hear persons who declare they are honest, that they would not steal—pilfer the reputation of even the innocent. They underrate that priceless gem, a good name. To destroy this, in their estimation, is no harm. These vipers of society will devastate all that an honest man or woman holds most precious, and in the meantime, pose as very sanctimonious people. “He who steals my purse,” says the Bard of Avon, “steals trash ; but he who robs me of my good name, takes all I have, and leaves me poor indeed.” Such a thief takes the reputation of another, robs him of his peace of mind, sinks him in the scale of public opinion, paves the way to lawsuits, and sharpens the dagger of revenge. For what purpose ? So that the slanderer may satisfy some petty grudge, or for the exquisite pleasure of hearing her own tongue wag. There is, however, malice usually in the defamation. An old offense, real or imaginary, generally the latter, must be appeased ; and the slanderer strikes the blow in the most vital parts.

This is deplorable conduct ; still there is another phase to our subject—indeed, there are many phases. You will see persons in quest of news prejudicial to another, without any motive, unless it be to show how smart they are. Having learned something new, they cannot rest quietly or allow others to rest, but run from place to place, telling of their latest discovery. Their slander assumes the provoking attitude of derision. They laugh at others who are better than themselves ; deride those who are their superiors. They belittle none so much as themselves. Alexander Pope says pointedly : “ The fool has still an itching to deride, and fain would be on the laughing side.” This class quiz for information only to make fun of their dupe or abuse others. They imagine none so cute as themselves.

No one can make sport of them, yet they are the very ones of whom sport can be made ; and if they would only reflect upon their own history, and study their own defects, they might remodel their behavior before ridiculing others who mind their own business. This class is made up largely of fools, who are busy in caring for the concerns of others, while they are neglecting their own duties and injuring themselves in the estimation of all sensible people. Should they meet, nevertheless, the object of their slander, they are so very social, so friendly, and so sweet, that you would never suspect them of such malice, or as having a gatling gun for a tongue. They would not dare intimate to a person's face what they said so flippantly behind his or her back. Ecclesiastes (x.—II.) is very applicable here : "*If the serpent bite in silence, he is nothing better than backbiteth secretly.*" In fact the slanderer is held in contempt by those very ones who appear so delighted with the news ; for they know that the slanderer's bite is more deadly than the serpent's. The one may kill the body ; the other destroys a good name, undermines the health of his victim, and leaves him hopelessly prostrated.

"*Bear one another's burdens, and so shall you fulfil the law of Christ,*" says St. Paul to the Galatians. To comply with this exhortation, is truly a kind and generous work ; but what about those who, instead of assisting, will increase the burden until the heart, already overladen with sorrow and perhaps misfortune, breaks from grief. Do slanderers know no pity ? Has the slanderer no thought of religion ? If every man is to be judged according to his works, what an awful reckoning is in store for the base person who trifles with another's reputation. How will he or she account for all the precious time wasted in doing evil ?

It is wonderful that such a person cannot find something profitable to occupy himself or herself. Were you to step into her home, you would see the sad condition of things. You would notice that her hands are not as active as her tongue. See her children without care and without training ; see her husband,—he surely has his purgatory on earth. In a word, this woman whose tongue is ever loaded to shoot down the fair name of a neighbor, does not know enough to take care of her own domestic affairs. She is usually a model of filth—a filthy tongue, a filthy person, and a filthy home. We would say to the slandered one : “Put your trust in God. Mind not the virulence of your defamer. The bitterness and venom of slanderous speech destroy its effects. People can discern. They soon understand persons of a vile character. Pray to God for patience. Ask Him to advise you. Live down, by the purity of your lives, these infamous assaults. If you are innocent, all the better. You then can afford to be composed. God watches over us all. He will protect you, and in time turn your affliction into joy.”

We should learn a lesson from the venomous slander and calumny of the Jews. They attacked the goodness of our Divine Lord ; endeavored to misconstrue His power, and change the admiring multitude into revilers. They failed ; so shall the slanderer ever. If any of you have been guilty of this grave sin of slander, resolve never to indulge in it again. Ask God’s pardon, and do all in your power to restore the good names which you have tarnished. Then in the time of your trials, others will speak well of you. Their words of encouragement will be your solace ; and Jesus, who was so often wronged, will come to you and enable you to carry your cross with patience and with fortitude.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten. (St. John vi.—13.)

My Dear Friends : This stupendous manifestation of our Saviour's power is a proof of His tenderness and love for the human race. It tells us also that God never abandons those who follow Him. Although they may encounter trouble; although the heart may often be weary,—still the followers of Christ will be blessed with a solace in every affliction. In the instance already cited, five thousand followed our Divine Lord. They are attracted by the sublimity of His discourses. His simplicity, His kindness, the affability of His manner, draw them toward the centre of their existence, just as the small spheres are attracted by the sun. He knows they must be hungry—hungry physically as well as spiritually. He inquires whether there is any means to feed them. There is not. Only five loaves and two fishes are among the vast multitude. But what are these to so many! Jesus blesses these, however; the people eat thereof; they are filled; and twelve baskets full of fragments are gathered up. An incomprehensible display of Omnipotence, fraught with many useful lessons.

Among the many thoughts suggested by this miracle, we are naturally led to consider the mystic multiplication of Our Lord and Saviour in the most august sacrifice

of the Mass ;—a miracle compared with which the multiplication of the loaves and fishes loses its marvellousness. In the one, Our Lord gives bread to nourish the body ; in the other, He gives Himself to nourish both body and soul. In the former, He shows His tenderness for mankind by feeding them from the products of His power ; in the latter, His mercy, affection, and love are proven by the extent of His humiliation. By the word of His priest, He leaves heaven and descends upon our altars. What incomparable obedience and humiliation ! Who can conceive the limitlessness of this love ! Who can explain the mercy thus accorded to us poor, miserable sinners by a bountiful Saviour ! In the depths of our hearts, in the silence of our meditations, we may get some glimpses of the wonderful beneficence contained in the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

Now, we may ask ourselves with what pious deportment we should assist at the sacrifice of the Mass—a sacrifice which reproduces the sacrifice of Calvary in an unbloody manner. What should be the preparation ? What ought to be the intention ? With what holy and engrossing fervor should we not be permeated in order that we may show our gratitude for such an inestimable blessing, and draw benefits therefrom ? It appears to me that all this can be obtained by dwelling upon the psalm recited by the priest at the foot of the altar. He begins, after making the sign of the cross, by saying : “ *Introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum qui lætificat in juventutem meam.*”—*I shall enter to the Altar of my God, to God Who rejoices in my youth.*” I shall enter to the altar of my God, could be said with profit by everyone after he has sprinkled himself, at the church doors, with holy water. I shall enter to the altar of my God. I shall not linger on the outside, gazing at the people as they come

to church. I shall not obstruct the way. I shall not make comments about the passers-by. I shall set a good example by approaching the altar of my God—by entering the church and preparing for Mass. Every care shall be left behind, every distraction, every ambition. Thoughts of wealth, of power, of distinction, shall be banished. Here will I prepare for the unspeakable sacrifice about to take place. Here will I devoutly pray in the temple of my God. Here will I pour forth my troubles, express my wants, return thanks, and implore protection and mercy in the presence of my God—in the presence of my God Who rejoices in my youth ! Who rejoices in the youthfulness of everyone's innocence ! Who rejoices in the aged who have never grown old in sin ! Who rejoices in the pure of heart and the noble of intellect, that have never prostituted their virtues and talents to selfish, abject ends !

“*Judica me, Deus !*”—*Judge me, O God !* Judge me ; for you know me for what I am. You know every pulsation of my heart, every act of my intellect. You are acquainted with every temptation, with every struggle ;—how much I have willingly offended, how much I struggled to avoid. Others may blame me unnecessarily. Others do not know what has been shunned, fought against, and suffered. Selfish motives may influence them. Envy, ignorance, or malice, may warp their judgment ; but Thou, O God ! art just, and though I have transgressed Thy law, pardon a forlorn creature who craves for mercy ! “*Et discerne causam meam de gente non sancta.*”—*And discern—distinguish my cause from the unholy.* In their malice, they have offended Thee ; they boast of their iniquities. They have insulted Thee, rebelled against Thee, denied Thee. It is truth that I, too, have been a disobedient

child,—that I have violated Thy law ; but I desired to do right, though I did do wrong ; and no sooner was Thy Sacred Majesty offended, than I was overwhelmed with shame and sorrow. I did wrong, but wished I had not done so. Discern my cause, I pray Thee, from the unrighteous who rebelled against Thee and flaunted their rebellion. “*Et ab homine iniquo et doloso, erue me.*”—*And from the iniquitous and deceitful, deliver me, O my God!* Preserve me from bad company! Protect me from those who would corrupt my understanding, rob me of virtue, degrade me, and condemn my soul to everlasting torments! Assist me, that I may always walk with the light of Thy divine truth. In all the trials of life, may I ever confide in Thee, my God, my hope, my refuge!

“*Quia tu es Deus, fortitudo mea; quare me repulisti?*”—*Because Thou art, O God! my fortitude; wherefore hast Thou repelled me? Why dost Thou cast me off? True, I have rebelled against Thee, I have abused Thy holy law, and disregarded Thy graces; yet Thou art my God, my Father, my all! Thou art my strength, and one of Thy great prerogatives is mercy. Then be merciful to me, a sinner! Judge me not according to Thy justice, but according to Thy mercy. Pardon Thou me, a suppliant craving to be restored to Thy friendship. Therefore, do not repel me, but forgive Thy erring child. “Et quare tristis incedo?”—And why do I go sorrowful—“dum affligit me inimicus”—whilst the enemy afflict me? Why am I troubled or afraid, so long as Thou art my fortitude? Thou art the God of the universe. In Thy hand rests the destiny of nations and individuals. Thou wilt protect all confiding in Thy strength. My enemies may seek to injure me; but Thou canst baffle their devices and turn their evil efforts into triumphs for me.*

“*Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam !*”—*Send forth Thy light and Thy truth !* Illumine my dark intellect with the rays of Thy divine light ! Put Thy truth in my heart and upon my lips ! With these will I walk courageously and honorably, although my enemies may plot against me. Being possessed of these priceless gifts, I can avoid what is wrong, while I journey on the path which leads to Thee. “*Ipsa me deduxerunt et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum.*”—*These very things have conducted me and brought me into Thy holy mountain.* These have induced me to come this morning to hear Mass. These have led me into Thy holy temple,—into the presence of Thy divine Son ! From bad company, these have spared me. From the temporal affairs of life, they have conducted me, that in this holy place I may pour forth my soul to Thee in prayer. “*Et in tabernacula tua.*”—*And into Thy tabernacles.* And they have brought me into Thy tabernacles—into the very abode of my Saviour ! How could I loiter on the outside, around the doors, passing remarks upon the worshippers coming to Thee to pray ? Why should I, standing near the threshold of Thy temple, use language vile enough for infamous places ? And afterward, is it possible that Thou could listen to prayers pronounced by lips which insulted Thy Divine Majesty only a few moments before ? No ; Thy light and Thy truth have graciously conducted me into Thy temple and into the presence of Thy tabernacles. Here I will return thanks to Thy infinite goodness ! Here in the audience hall of my Lord, Thy Eternal Son, will I give expression to the boundless gratitude due Thee for all Thy mercies and blessings ! From out of the depths of my poor heart, I thank Thee for every favor of the past ; and with deepest humility and

unwavering confidence, implore Thy gracious protection and assistance for the future! May Thy light ever be a lamp to my tottering feet, and Thy truth the compass and the star on my way to eternity!

"Confitebor tibi in cithara Deus, Deus meus."—*I shall confess Thee, O God, my God, upon the harp.* I will praise Thee upon the harp of my heart. Every chord thereof shall vibrate in acknowledgment of all Thy beneficence and tender mercies. Every throb I offer to Thee. The universe is a glorious manifestation of Thy power, resources, and goodness. Health, talent, genius, are gifts of your exhaustless bounty. *"Quare tristis est anima mea?"*—*Wherefore art Thou sorrowful, O my soul?* *"Et quare conturbas me?"*—*And wherefore dost Thou disturb me?* Why art thou cast down? Why afflicted? Though toiling with the troubles of life and the sadness caused thereby, why art thou sorrowful since thy God still liveth and will help thee in due time? Why dost thou disturb me? Why not be reconciled with thy trials? Here, at least, in the presence of thy Saviour and thy solace, be calm; consider His sufferings and His love for man; offer thy disquietude to Him, and implore His aid.

"Spera in Deo."—*Hope in God.* Place your confidence in Him. Offer Him all the disappointments and successes of the past, the anxieties of the present, and pray Him to banish all doubts and fears of the future. *"Quoniam adhuc confitebor illi."*—*For I will give praise to Him.* Notwithstanding that thou, my soul, art bowed down by sorrow and by recollections of the past, still will I praise the Author of so many favors, the Father and Guardian of my life. *"Salutare vultus mei et Deus meus."*—*The salvation of my countenance and my God.* The salvation of my countenance—the

One Who hast given virtue to my soul, Who hast kept me from the wanderings of sin, Who hast given innocence to my soul, that with an erect head and an honest countenance I may defy my enemies. My God, in Whom I trust, from Whom I have received every good possessed by me, in Whom all my hope is centered, may Thou ever be the salvation of my countenance, and may Thou adorn it with honesty, simplicity, and courage !

In this manner, or a similar one, should we prepare ourselves for the loving, benign sacrifice of the Mass. Upon these things ought we to reflect during this solemn time. You ought to return thanks to God ; beseech Him to be merciful to you ; present to Him every fear and every doubt, every sorrow and every trial. Entreat Him to guard you with the shield of grace. Thus you will be free from detractions. Your prayers will rise like heavenly incense to the tabernacle and to the august Being who resides therein. He will bless you, and you will leave His sanctuary, strengthened in resolution, reanimated by grace, and enabled to fight successfully the battles of life.

PASSION SUNDAY.

Amen, amen, I say unto you : if any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever. (St. John viii.—51.)

Very appropriately does the Church, my dear friends, introduce Passion Sunday with this marvellous Gospel. She beseeches us to dwell piously at all times upon the passion and death of our Divine Lord ; but during the next two weeks, she implores us in a special manner to meditate upon the stupendous sacrifices made for us by the Redeemer. She exhorts us to go in spirit to those holy places consecrated by the precious blood of Jesus, the Saviour of the world ; to recall with devotion and gratitude all that God has accomplished in order that we may never know spiritual death ; and thus to embellish our souls with heavenly graces, that we may with great joy welcome the glorious feast of Christ's Resurrection. In order the better to impress upon our minds the vast importance of such preparation, she cites for us the words of our Divine Lord : "*Amen, amen, I say unto you : if any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever.*" It is unnecessary to say to you that the death here meant is of the soul, not of the body. The Jews seemed to misunderstand Him, or in their malice, desired to turn the people from Him. Indeed, they could not well plead ignorance of His meaning. They surely knew that He did not refer to the dissolution of

the body, but to the depravity of the soul. Their purpose was unmistakably to embitter the people against Him, and this they attempted by ridicule and calumny.

It is useless to mention that spiritual death is incomparably more deplorable than the separation of the soul from the body, which we commonly call death. Physical death is the lot of man ; spiritual death is not ; for God wishes all men to be saved. At the coffin's side, the mother's grief breaks forth in tears ; suppressed sobs are the messengers of sorrow from a father's tortured heart. The child weeps over the grave of the parent, and the parent laments the loss of the child ; but what is this affliction compared to the shame, disgrace, and remorse of a spiritual death. The grave has its terrors ; still, what are they, in comparison to the prostrating heart-ache and the agony of soul occasioned by sin. How often has a mother wished her child dead, that he or she may be taken from bad company ? How many sleepless nights has she spent in that worry which devours the vital parts, while it almost drives to madness ! The father is aged. The one in whom his affections were centered and his gray hairs found hope, is now the deadly spring whence comes unalloyed sorrow and insupportable shame. What is the grief of the grave when you see the dejected countenance, the haggard, troubled looks of a father and mother brooding over the spiritual destruction of their child. Those of you who have witnessed such a sight, know that the carnage of the battle-field,—death amidst the merciless flames, or upon the freezing billows of the ocean—are nothing when estimated with the frenzied grief of an affectionate mother and devoted father, at the dishonored life of a cherished offspring. By these parents, pangs a thousand times more terrible than temporal death, are suffered.

But what of the sinner—the one spiritually dead? The brow which now hangs in disgrace, fair honor adorned. The face now disfigured by debauchery, once innocence and modesty mantled. The heart that once beat high with hope, is now corroded by remorse. He is dead, dead morally and religiously; nay, we may add, socially, civilly, and to a great extent, physically dead! He is no longer himself. The vigor of health has left his body. The lustre has left his eye—manliness is lost forever. He was once respected; now he is spurned. Honor, decency, affection, have been swallowed up in lust and drunkenness. Should it be a daughter, the same is true, with this difference, that the fall seems greater and more deplorable. Dead morally, religiously dead; dead, too, to usefulness, dead to every noble or inspiring effort, as if the grave contained such corpse! Were he dead and buried, it would not be so bad; for now he remains degraded and degrading others—a curse to society. Such are banished from the converse of the honest and the pure; exiled from the friendship and esteem, from the social and civil distinction to which they might have risen. They are socially and civilly dead. No lofty emotion fills the breast or impels the intellect to great undertakings. Instead, a work-house or a state's prison confines the limbs and bars the talents which were destined by the Creator for noble purposes. All is lost! Kind hearts go down to the grave in sorrow! Health ruined, intellectual ability misapplied, others wronged, graces abused, and himself or herself degraded and cursed! All is lost; and why? Because such heeded not the exhortation of our Divine Lord in this day's Gospel. They kept not His word in their hearts, and consequently they experienced the unrelenting blow of death—the withering infection of sin.

Ah, but had he kept the word of God, had he never violated the law of God in a grievous way, he would not know the miserable death which he now endures ! The impress of honor would be on his brow, and the smile of heaven in his countenance. He would be a useful member of society, a dutiful child of the Church, and a true servant of God. Ill fortune might attack him, still his hope would be moored to the throne of heaven, and God would be his solace and defense. How noble his life ! What a blessing to his kindred ! What an example to others, had he retained the word of God in his heart ! Oh, what a contrast between what he is and what he should be ! He knows no rest. He reviews the course of his life, only to suffer the pangs of remorse. And then to think he has abandoned his Eternal Father. "*When you pray,*" says Jesus, "*say, Our Father, who art in heaven.*" Our Father ! What a sublime thought ! No tyrant, no enemy, but the affectionate relationship of father and child. But misery of misery ! to go away, yea, break away from such a Father. How wretched must that one be who severs the bond of grace which binds him to the Eternal Father, the source of all perfection, and unites himself with all that is pernicious and destructive. So much lost and nothing gained, except the companionship of the wicked and its debasing consequences. The angels of heaven must weep over such misfortune, to see so many opportunities despised, to behold so many graces abused, to be cognizant of so many pleadings spurned.

Is not this prodigal child to be pitied ? Pity and blame ought to be blended in the reprimand. He would not listen to advice, he discarded the admonitions of the Church and the counsels of his dearest friends. All this is true ; but who knows how much he was

tempted, or how great was the struggle before he fell ? It is for you and me to learn from the sad sights around us. What has happened others, may happen us. With prayer deep and earnest, we should implore, night and morning, the protection of heaven. Often, during the day, we should invoke the aid of Almighty God, that in the time of conflict He may stretch forth His almighty arm in our defense, and bid our enemies desist.

Thus far we have considered the temporal loss; but what shall we say about the spiritual death ? His life on earth has been a failure;—ah ! shall we say a curse ? Yet, what of his life beyond the threshold of earthly existence ? God gave him grace. In the eternal design, he was destined for happiness ; but, alas ! unless he remodel his life, unless he bend from the current bearing him to destruction, he will be more miserable in eternity than he is on earth. Beyond the grave there is no chance to repent. The cry for pardon is unheeded ; God's justice rules and determines our future condition. Merits and demerits are placed in the balance. We are honestly but rigorously dealt with. If we fail, the loss is ours, and also the blame. Misery endless in its duration, ought to be avoided. It is in our power to do so. If we comply with God's grace, if we keep His word in our hearts, all will be well with us.

Is it not folly to do otherwise ? Ought not it be our ambition, the highest and most determined, to retain that precious gift which makes us great on earth and greater in eternity ? With what zeal we all should cherish the eternal word of God. The most abundant wealth, the highest distinction, the most enviable renown, are nothing to God's word. But the preservation of God's word upon the tablets of your soul, is an incentive and an aid to all the achievements and accom-

plishments which ennoble man's life, make him respected by his fellow-men and loved by his kindred. Since the word of God has such influence upon your earthly career, who can estimate the reward beyond the grave? Who can depict the glories awaiting the faithful beyond the brink of time? To do so is beyond the ken of the human intellect. Yet you can find much proof in the promise of your Saviour: "*If any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever.*"

Let us labor strenuously to keep His word. In all the adverse fortune of life, let us ever look to heaven for help. Approaching as we are the sacred memories of Christ's death, we should renew in our souls the recollections of His sufferings and love. With fervor, we should pray; with compassion, we should meditate upon the stations of the cross; with love, we should receive the sacraments, that Jesus may say to us at the moment of death: "*You have kept My word, and I shall keep My promise with you: you shall not see death forever.*"

PALM SUNDAY.

And the multitude that went before and that followed cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David ; Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Matt. xxi.—9.)

On that memorable Palm Sunday morning, a record of which has just been read for you, the people of Jerusalem were beside themselves with rejoicement. What was the cause thereof? Why are the people gathering in throngs? Why so much enthusiasm? The thoroughfares are filled by people in their holiday attire, and one vies with another in the manifestation of their joyful praise. A stranger on that Palm Sunday morning might have inquired for the cause of such great demonstration ; but for you, no explanation is necessary. You know that Jesus, the Son of God, was approaching the city by the way of the Valley of Josephat. He came not as a victor from the fields of carnage ; and though He was Infinite Wisdom, He was not praised on that day for sagacity won in the council chambers of the world. He was a conqueror, but his victory was over the human heart. He was celebrated, but His greatness was earned by the stupendous works wrought by His power. The memory of His miracles was still fresh in the mind of the populace, and they consequently praised Him for His goodness, while they called Him a great prophet. He was received by the people, not for

the magnificent display of His caparison or the gorgeous decorations of Himself and retinue, but for His amiable tenderness and unexcelled meekness.

A mystic power, a divine influence, pervaded the heart of the Jewish populace. Crowds went to meet Him, to give Him welcome as He rode in triumph to the city. "*The multitude that went before and that followed Him, cried, saying : ' Hosanna to the Son of David : Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ! Hosanna in the highest ! ' "*" They tore palm and olive branches from the trees, and scattered them before Him on the way. They even spread their garments before Him, as a token of the profoundest respect. They went into ecstasy. Everywhere were expressions of praise and manifestations of rejoicement. Thousands of throats sang out with friendly vehemence, hosannas of esteem and love. It was a glorious day ; but how soon the scene was changed ! To-day we hear the songs of praise and the joyful cry of welcome ; on Good Friday our hearts are shocked by the infuriated mob, in the same city, crying out, Crucify Him ! crucify Him ! To-day He passes the mount of olives in triumph ; on Holy Thursday night He is dragged from His place of prayer by a fierce rabble and hurried brutally to prison. To-day His path is strewn by the garments of a happy people ; on Good Friday they nail Him to the cross. Oh, what awful instability ! What a monstrous contrast ! What infamous contradiction !

You search for the cause, and it is largely found in the jealousy and fickleness of the human heart. It is thus with man. To-day he admires ; to-morrow he dispraises the object of his admiration. To-day he esteems, and to-morrow he hates what he previously loved. To-day he makes idols, and to-morrow he breaks

them. History is replete with examples of this kind. The record of ancient and modern times relate sad stories of the fickleness of man. Let me tell you of a few, for the purpose of illustrating the subject of to-day's reflections. Demosthenes of old, the father and the master of eloquence, the tutor of the student of oratory in every age, was banished from Athens, his home. The irresistible torrents of his eloquence rush forth against the encroachments of Philip of Macedon and Alexander, Philip's son. From his oratory pealed forth the notes of warning. He toiled to arouse the people to a feeling of their danger ; but his efforts were misconstrued, and he, the glory of ancient and modern ages, was driven from the city. Followed by his enemies preconcerting deadly designs upon his person, he concealed poison in the stylus, the instrument with which he gave to posterity grand models for imitation. Having been captured, he partook of the poison, and fell dead in the arms of his captors. Socrates, for his labors in building up the morality and intellectual ability of Grecian youth, at the instigation of a poet, was adjudged guilty of corruption ; and though innocent, was condemned to take the fatal hemlock juice, from which he perished. Aristides, a man who deserved every mark of honorable distinction, was ostracized by his countrymen, on charges as frivolous as they were unwarranted. There is an instance connected with his ostracism which I shall relate. In a case of banishment, six-thousand votes were required before sentence was pronounced. The name of the person to be exiled was written on a shell, and this was given to the judge in the market place, who counted the votes. Aristides was walking upon one of the streets of Athens, when an illiterate person meeting him, asked him to write the

name of Aristides upon his shell. Whereupon Aristides inquired whether this man had ever injured him. "No," was the reply, "he never injured me; nor do I know the man; but I am tired of hearing him called the just." Aristides wrote his name upon the shell, and set out to his place of banishment. In the history of our own country, you find the man who expended his fortune in caring for the soldiers in Valley Forge, languishing in prison for a debt. This sad case induced a poet to say :

"It must in sooth, be joy for you to see
Yon monument reared to thee;
Piled granite and prison cell,
The land repays thy service well.

There is not anything so easily and so readily erased from the human mind as the memory of benefits received or kindness bestowed. Prosperity's gale sweeps you onward; then praises are showered upon you. But should adverse winds break upon you, then censures take the place of the dying echo of previous praise. In failure, we discover our friends. And it is strange how so many are condemned in their adversity, who were lauded in the day of their success. The carper does not care to understand that a man's greatest and noblest efforts are often made when he struggles with misfortune. Then, indeed, is he the grandest; but his grandeur and superhuman exertions are overlooked on account of the inconstancy of his friends, or they are hidden by the viciousness of his enemies. This instability, this fickleness, is what changed the hosannas of Palm Sunday into the awful cry of Crucify Him, crucify Him! It transformed joy into wrath, laudations into curses.

You, my dear friends, may censure the Jews for their

inconsistency, for their ingratitude ; but before you remonstrate against the Jews, consider your own ingratitude to God. This is Palm Sunday morning. You have assembled here in His Church to praise Him, to sing hosannas of thanksgiving and joy ; still, before Good Friday, will not some of you cry out Crucify Him, crucify Him ? Monstrous thought ! Awful expression ! some of you may say. Yet, by your action you shall crucify again your Divine Lord. By your own sin and foul ingratitude you may, ere the sun declines on next Good Friday, change your praises into insults and deadly offences against Jesus, Who loved you, and Who continues to love you so much. How often have you welcomed your Saviour into your bosom, only to forget His presence and grossly offend Him shortly afterward ! How often have you bedecked your hearts with the mantle of your affections, when in the Blessed Sacrament He was about to visit you ; and ere the night of that happy day closed upon you, you defile that heart which received Him and that tongue which whispered your joys at His coming ! Had the Jews been persuaded that Jesus was the Son of the Most High, do you think they would have persecuted Him, as we His children by adoption have so often done ? How many times we have spurned His goodness, forgotten His mercies, and belittled His passion and death !

All this is due in a large measure to our fickleness. Had we been more mindful of the inestimable favors conferred upon us ; had we oftener availed ourselves of those channels of grace instituted by our beneficent Saviour, we would have been stabilitated in our good resolution, and been more exemplary in our conduct—conduct pleasing to God and beneficial to our fellow-men. Let us now, as we gaze upon the spiritual

barrenness of our past lives, determine that during this week we shall, in a special manner, render homage to God. Let the young and the old come to church during this holy time ; and by their prayers and good works manifest sorrow for their sins, thanks for heavenly benedictions, and compassion for the sufferings and death of Christ, Our Lord. Though you deserve much commendation for your regularity in attending the religious exercises of the holy season of Lent, still persevere. Always let it be your highest aim to love and serve Him Who underwent such great ignominy for you. In thus observing God's law, in thus appreciating His magnanimous generosity, you will ever be irreproachable Catholics ; and dying, may you, on your way from this life, sing anthems of joy and gratitude never to end !

EASTER SUNDAY.

INFLUENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH UPON CIVILIZATION.

He is risen. (Mark xvi.—6.)

My Dear Friends : The presence of Jesus, the Saviour of mankind, on earth, began a new era in the history of the human race. His death upon the cross drew the human heart toward Him ; but His Resurrection gave confidence, while it afforded evidence of His divinity. Were other proofs required to establish His claims, we find them abundantly in the history of modern times. They are manifested in the influence of His doctrine upon society. Upon this glorious feast, commemorative of the Resurrection of the Son of God, civilization attests the force and persuasiveness of His divine precepts. At this time, when both the durability and efficacy of the New Dispensation have been tested by nineteen centuries of trial, we discover no symptom of decay or impotence.

The Catholic Church to-day is more vigorous, more influential than ever before ; and civilization acknowledges the debt she owes the spouse of Jesus. Behold her this morning celebrating the glories of Christ ! Here in this beautiful church in the mountain, you only typify the magnificent ceremonies of the Catholic Church everywhere held in commemoration of the

stupendous event which transpired on this day. As you kneel to-day offering your homage to Jesus, so millions of Catholics throughout the civilized world do in like manner. What unity in faith ! What devotion at the holy sacrifice ! What praise to the Creator of all good ! What a glorious tribute from faithful hearts ! Does not all this tell of the influence of the Church upon civilization ? Can such devotion, such unity of love for the Saviour of mankind, be ineffectual in drawing souls toward Him who is the perfection of all created things ? As they approach this centre of perfection, must they not be effected by its radiations and subdued by its refulgence ? But what leads them thither ? The Catholic Church, which He established for this purpose. Since civilization is an evidence of an advancement toward the centre of perfection, it cannot be successfully denied but that the Church is the divinely-appointed guide to conduct the human race through the various degrees of civilization, until mankind reaches its greatest development on earth, and crosses the boundary of time.

Christ is risen ! But what civilization would accrue from that resurrection, had not that same Christ organized some means by which His doctrine could be taught and transmitted to posterity ? His principles of a new civilization would have been forgotten upon His ascension into heaven. It was necessary, then, in the economy of this Dispensation, to propagate the will of the Redeemer. Had that will not been diffused, the purpose for which Jesus died would have been frustrated. But divine intelligence knew how to disseminate the principles of Christianity, and therefore said to His apostles : “ *Go forth and teach all nations.*” Thus the Catholic Church was commissioned to establish

a new order of things. To be sure, civilization is not the primary motive of Christianity ; still civilization follows from Christianity as an effect from its cause. The Catholic Church was instituted to preach Christ Crucified ; to tell of His love for the human race ; of the worth and destiny of every human soul ; of the nobility of that soul ; of the chastity which should adorn it and the lofty purposes to which it should attain. Could man abide by such teachings and not advance in civilization ? Would he not become more distinguished for those noble qualities of soul which mark a good man, in proportion to his adherence to the precepts imparted by the Man-God, Jesus Christ ? As the tongue voices the thoughts of the intellect, so civilization speaks of the divine source whence it springs ; the former depends upon the latter.

It may be said that nations celebrated for their high degree of civilization, flourished before the twilight of Christianity. As to this advanced form of civilization in such nations as Greece and Rome, we beg to make a few comments. But first let us say that there was a religion supporting and maintaining that ancient civilization ; and if the religion was natural and imperfect, so was the civilization. Some may be astounded at our impertinence in thus speaking of those idols of ancient times to which so many moderns offer incense. Permit us to explain. We do not wish to underrate the achievements of these distinguished nations of antiquity, or belittle their attainments. We admire the perfection of their painting and sculpture ; we praise the sagacity of their statesmen and the valor and strategy of their soldiers ; we marvel at their poetry and rejoice in their eloquence ; but we condemn their inhumanity, while we challenge a comparison

between their most exalted citizens and an average Christian. We discover among their greatest sons, traitors who sold their countries' interests for gold. Some of them were tyrants, and many of them were merciless butchers. They exhibited some natural powers ; yet the strength of their intellects, the delicacy of their imagination and their skill in giving expression to both, remained in the sphere of the material. With a few exceptions, they never rose to those grand conceptions which denote Christian genius ; and those exceptions never broke through the darkness which surrounded them, or reached those exalted views of liberty and equality declared by Jesus and taught by His servant, the Catholic Church. Compare their moral code with that of Christianity, and the comparison will amply illustrate the superiority of the latter.

Let us now, my Christian friends, consider some of the notable characteristics of Christian civilization. In these are contained the active principles of civilization. You need not be told one of these is the equality of mankind. All men are created equal, is one of the great principles of our government. But who first impressed man with the truth therein embodied ? Jesus, the Saviour of man. Who preached that truth for nineteen centuries ? The Catholic Church. Who infused that truth into the life of society ? The same promoter of society, the Catholic Church. Beyond the influence of Christian civilization, point out a nation which sustained this vitalizing principle or encouraged its sway. Show us an example of such magnanimity ! Tell us of a people who denounced slavery or who struck the shackles from the limbs of the serf ! You cannot. The condition of slavery was hopeless. There was no equality, no Christian charity, no true civilization !

Before the birth of the Christian era, the few were great and the masses slaves. The captive of war was doomed to a life of slavery. He was treated as a brute. He graced the triumph of his captors, and was often doomed to die in the arena in order to entertain the brutish whims of a people whom some call highly civilized. Those who escaped such a death, knew only drudgery, merciless masters, and ignominy as degrading as it was inhumane. Say not this is civilization ! Say not that slavery becomes a human creature endowed with the image and likeness of his God, with an immortal soul redeemed by the blood of Christ !

The Catholic Church severed the bondage which debased the human body and retarded the development of the human soul. She pleaded for the captive and slave. Her voice was raised against the abominable institution of slavery, and demanded liberty for all ! As an evidence of her success, there is not a nation in union with her, which retains the nefarious traffic of slavery or serfdom. In her first efforts she sought and obtained the liberation of the slave ; and afterward, when serfdom was introduced into Europe by the devastating invader, she never gave up the contest until she abolished the enslaving power of the master, and rescued the serf from his abject condition !

Bancroft, our American historian, admires the equality of man inculcated by the Catholic Church in the administration of her sacraments. He is describing the great efforts made by the early Catholic missionaries among the Indians. Among the exalted features of Catholic instruction and Catholic magnanimity, he notes especially the administration of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. "The savage," he says, "partook of this sacrament which the kings and princes of Europe received. The

most regal person in the Old World could not receive more, and the savage of the forest was not denied this." An extraordinary proof, he continues, of the equality of man as taught and practised by that Church. But the Catholic Church, in administering the sacraments to the native of the wilderness, was only fulfilling the command of her Divine Master, Jesus Christ : "*Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.*" (Mark xvi.—15.) Make no distinction between the great and the lowly. All shall participate in my sacraments, and shall be sanctified by my grace. One only requisite ! One obligation ! Only one ! And this is worthiness—and this is demanded from all without exception !

When the distinction of caste and feudalism threatened to destroy in Europe every vestige of civil authority and invalidate every human right, the Church fought the battle of social order, and triumphed over principles which must necessarily have lead to anarchy. As a distinguished writer in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* argued : " Feudalism was the worst foe to social order ; because it was equally opposed to the sovereignty of the monarch and the liberty of the people. Could it have held its position, Europe must have sunk into barbarism ; but it had to oppose a powerful principle—the influence of the Church. In the eleventh century, the papacy fought the battle of freedom and civilization." Let me add when the distinction of caste was everywhere recognized in social life, the Catholic Church alone knew no aristocracy except that of talent ! Men of literary attainments, men of genius, were acknowledged and respected, it mattered not whether they arose from the ranks of the serf or from the families of the great ; the lowly could aspire to the tiara, and wear the ring of the fisherman. In fact, the humblest from

the low ranks of society sat in the Chair of St. Peter and wielded the destinies of the Church. Wonderful equality ! Marvellous liberty ! The Catholic Church never knew a slave ; all were freemen with her ! Free in their inherent rights ! Free by the redemption of Christ ! Free by the grace of the sacraments instituted by that Christ !

You have heard it said that the Catholic Church is an enemy of progress, of progress in literature, of progress in science, of progress in art, of progress in anything and everything which awakens the dormant energies of the human soul. She is a foe of all enlightenment, the coercer of the will, and enslaver of the intellect. But history and your own personal observations contradict such calumny. History teaches that the Catholic Church was a friend of society, and at times its only friend ; that she was the champion of man's rights ; that she stood between him and the oppressor ; that amid so much chaos during so many centuries she was the one great unyielding power which defended man's liberty and sustained social life. But she is the foe of enlightenment, and intellectual progress is her ruin, we are told. Let me reply that during the last three centuries the intellect of man has been most active. One startling invention has followed another with amazing rapidity ; literature is cultivated with untiring industry ; every form of religion which can be imagined, has been tried, and no religion at all has millions of followers ; still, has the Catholic Church suffered from this progress ? Who will say she has ? She was ever the foremost in scholarly attainment, and she is so still. The brilliancy of the last few centuries of advancement did not dimmer her glory nor diminish her luster. Indeed, it only assisted in establishing her claim and declaring

her supremacy. In every struggle she astonished her adversaries by the profundity of her knowledge and the inexhaustibility of her intellectual resources.

Her foes were from every field of disputation, and their failure to triumph, proves her power and endurance. Many urged that she would pale before the scrutiny of recent examination; that being the enemy of learning, she would finally be subdued by the diffusion of letters; when education became general, her weakness would be displayed. Is it so? What Church makes greater sacrifices for education? And who are those who are superior to her children in knowledge?

To enter into a closer examination of her merits in the matter of education would lead us beyond the limits of a sermon, which indeed we have already transgressed. Suffice it to say that her system of education is not deficient, as our public school system is. She trains the whole child. While she stimulates him to the highest efforts of profane knowledge, she points him toward heaven; she tells him of his duties toward himself, toward his neighbor, and toward his God. She trains him not only for earth, but also for heaven. She says to him: "*Ascend to the temple of erudition.* Gather the brightest laurels in the world of intellectual effort; but offer the bays of your victories to your God. To Him be always obedient; Him you must adore; from Him you must not depart." Does not this instruction lead to the highest development, to the highest civilization?

We have only considered briefly two factors in civilization: the equality of man and the influence of learning. There are other potent factors which we cannot at present examine. But in all means for the true advancement

of the human race, the Catholic Church is first ; and without her we would have only a pagan civilization. She has her principles of action from the source of all perfection, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit teaches and directs her. Her commission is from the lips of Jesus Himself, and will endure until the stars in the heavens grow dim, the sun refuse his light, and Jesus, the glory of this feast, will appear to judge the living and the dead !

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Thomas answered, and said to Him : My Lord, and my God.
(John xx.—28.)

My Dear Friends : This morning you are surprised, probably shocked, at the incredulity of St. Thomas the Apostle when he boasts : “ Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” What extraordinary words are these for an apostle to use ? What convincing proofs he demands, before he will acknowledge the Resurrection of his Lord and Master. You are astonished by the unbeliever of this age, when he bombastically declares he will not believe only what is demonstrated clearly to his reason. Yet, you see an apostle demanding the same grounds for conviction. St. Thomas had listened to the persuasive discourses of Jesus. He had noted their influence upon the multitudes. He had been a witness of miracles performed by the same divine power. To the speechless tongue, voice was given ; to the blind was given the joy of vision ; to the motionless limbs, the power of action ; to the sick, the happiness of health ; to the sinner, the peace of a pure soul ; to the dead, life. He had seen all these wonders. Why, then, should he not believe in the Resurrection without seeing the risen

Christ? Marvellous forbearance of Jesus! Judas had betrayed Him; St. Peter had denied Him; now Thomas disbelieves in the Resurrection. What treachery in His few chosen companions! What fickleness and insincerity!

St. Thomas had known that Jesus was dragged to the halls of judgment; he had at least heard of His scourging, and the crowning of thorns; and was convinced of His ignominious death upon the cross. Did these cruel acts in the tragic drama of salvation undermine his faith? Did a God dying on a cross seem inconsistent to him? Had he lost faith in his Divine Master? Was he about to unite with the Jews, the enemies of Jesus? What lack of devotion to his Divine Leader! What faithlessness to his Friend! What cold indifference to his Lord! Marvellous, indeed, that he did not reflect upon the past; that he did not draw strength and faith from the wondrous life of Christ. Probably he relied too much upon his own shallow powers of comprehension, and consequently the grace of faith was withdrawn for a time. Like the agnostic of our day, he was incredulous; he desired proofs.

But Jesus appeared to him, and impressed the seal of conviction upon him. Jesus also had witnesses—the disciples were present; so that had St. Thomas been inclined to make light of the matter to the other disciples, in order to shield his previous incredulity, he was not permitted: “*Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand and put it into My side; and be not incredulous but faithful.*” When he beheld his Divine Master before him; when he saw the wounds, he exclaimed: “*My Lord and my God!*” Well might he now be ashamed of his conduct.

His boasting had vanished. He stood in the august presence of his God, convicted of the want of affection, gratitude, and fidelity.

You may be disposed to reprimand St. Thomas. You may in thought aver that had you the opportunities with which he was blessed, you would have been firm in your faith, steadfast in your constancy, unwavering in your attachment to Jesus Crucified. Yea, the agnostic, or even the atheist may proclaim, had I seen these things, I would have knelt in adoration, and with my whole soul acknowledged my Lord and my God. Still, singular as my statement may at first appear to you, let me say you have as great evidence of the divinity of Christ as that bestowed upon the faithless Thomas. Nor do I mean to direct your attention to the revealed word of God in the Sacred Scriptures ; nor am I relying upon your inflexible faith to accept my arguments without proof. No : but I am able to place before you evidence which neither you nor the atheist can refute. Where is this evidence to be found ? In history and the human heart. That Jesus is the Son of His Eternal Father, is demonstrated by the history of the Church established by Him. If He was not the Son of God, He was a most cruel impostor ; but where is the impostor, or where was ever the impostor whose memory has lived as His ? What philosophy did they teach which survives ? What institutions did they found, which has with stood the tempests of civil strife ? What principles of morality did they inculcate, which still influence the conduct of society ? There are none. The perpetuity of the Catholic Church is a miracle in itself, sufficient to convince any unprejudiced thinker. The appearance of Jesus to incredulous Thomas was not more persuasive than the

continual existence of the Church for so many centuries. Dynasties have fallen; thrones have crumbled into decay; the map of the world has been often changed. In the midst of all agitation and decay, though disturbed by internal conflicts and attacked by external foes, the Church braved every storm, rode the billows of revolution, and is to-day more influential than ever before! What phenomenon can equal this? Let scoffers scoff; let atheists sneer; let agnostics boast,—but they cannot explain this phenomenon on any other hypothesis than that Jesus was the Son of God, and that His Church is under the protection of heaven. When we examine history with all its vicissitudes; when we ponder upon the marvellous growth and endurance of the Church,—we cry out with St. Thomas: “*My Lord and my God.*”

The other proof to which I wish to invite your attention, is the love in the human heart for Jesus Crucified. This love is incomparable to everything human. It is a phenomenon which cannot be explained except on the hypothesis mentioned above, that Jesus, the Son of Mary, is also the Son of God. How many have suffered capital punishment, and in a few days the excitement was passed, and they were forgotten. This is not only true of those outlaws who atoned for their crimes upon the scaffold; but also the innocent and noble who perish by the caprice of infuriate mobs or the malice of their enemies. Who thinks now of Demosthenes, of Socrates, of Cicero? But Jesus died an opprobrious death on the cross. No criminal was more degraded by man or more punished. Why, then, does His memory continue to dwell in the hearts of mankind? Why is it not forgotten? What perpetuates His love? What renders it so fixed and

immortal ? He was a great benefactor. Conceded. But there were other great benefactors before His day and since. Why are their memories wrapped in the folds of oblivion, while His is imperishable ? The unbeliever may reason as much as he likes ; he must return to the unavoidable conclusion : He was and is God.

Distinguished persons have flourished. Some were celebrated for their beneficence ; some for sagacity ; others for wisdom, valor, holiness ; but among all these celebrities, where is the one like unto Jesus ? Analyze their lives ; weigh their actions ; consider their influence ; estimate the efficacy of their names,—and again I inquire, where is there one among them comparable to Jesus ? Wonderful Babe ! You puzzle our comprehension, because you are divine. Many celebrated individuals have been honored by an idolizing people : monuments have been reared to declare their greatness ; still, to whom has so many monuments been erected, so many temples of worship dedicated, so many hearts devoted, as to Him who died the infamous death of the cross ?

In this very year several highly esteemed persons departed from this life. Among them two celebrated statesmen, Bismarck and Gladstone. How intensely they are woven into the warp and the woof of the history of this period. Their names were known in every part of the civilized world. Their influence was well-nigh unlimited. They could make and unmake nations ; but now what ? The grave has received their ashes ; and it would seem their memories, too, so little is spoken about them, though they are dead only a few months. But behold the inspiration in the sacred name of Jesus, though it is now approaching

nineteen centuries since He expired in anguish ! In every age, among every civilized people, His name has been venerated and Himself adored. Is this superstition ? If so, why cannot other superstitious effects be shown similiar to this. Why have not those votaries of atheism and agnosticism cast around some of their idols this magic cloak of superstitious power ? Why have they permitted Voltaire and Rosseau, Diderot and Kant, Spinoso, Darwin, and Huxley, to pass like dreams from the minds of men ? Why have they not embalmed some one of those in superstition, if for no other purpose, simply to deny Christ and prove that it is superstition which cherishes His love, while it perpetuates His memory ? Ah ! they well know that they are wrong, and that in Jesus of Nazareth there is something superhuman. They may be masters in sarcasm ; fluent of speech,—hypnotizers in a manner ; but they cannot deceive the faithful followers of Christ.

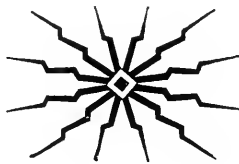
For Him the martyrs shed their blood ; for Him saints have undergone sufferings and privations ; for Him the greatest scholars have labored ; for Him the missionary has invited danger and willingly exposed his life, that many may hear of Jesus Crucified, and be enriched by the fruits of the Redemption. How our own country is replete with the history of those dauntless soldiers of the Cross whom the Indians tortured, and by savage brutality put to death, whom others followed to endure the same privations and meet the same fate ! Where in the annals of history, can you find such devotion and sacrifices to the principle of any man ? Surrounded by so many proofs of loyalty ; overwhelmed by the thought which these proofs inspire, we humbly exclaim : My Lord and my Jesus, you are truly God !

Behold the number who abandon the world with all its attractions ! They take the vows of voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and entire obedience. For evermore they must struggle against their passions ; they must for the will of a superior forget their own wishes ; no desire of wealth must tempt them to violate their vow of poverty. Why do they make such sacrifices ? Why submit to so many mortifications ? Why abandon their friends and home ? For the love of Jesus Crucified. Where can the agnostic or atheist find such love and attachment for any of their great teachers ? Where is the emperor who has discovered such fidelity in any of his subjects ? Where are any of the distinguished, the celebrated dead, for whom such sacrifices are made and so great love maintained ? Nowhere ; there are none who live so miraculously in the memory of others, except the Child of Bethlehem.

Here we have many acting not in accordance with the stupendous motives which actuate and control the destinies of men and nations, but entirely the contrary. Why is this ? The answer is simple : it is Jesus. His divine grace tenderly interferes and benignly directs many to renounce the common ways of mankind. His divine grace, Jesus hanging on the cross, is more potent than wealth, fame, or pleasure. He is loved, and why ? He conquers, and why ? Because He is God. Where is the rationalist who can explain these phenomena ? He may gibe, but gibes are not arguments. He cannot point out a single person or object who retains such influence over the human race, or for whom so great loyalty and love have been manifested. History tells only of one, and that One is Jesus. From the arms of Mary, His Mother ; from the manger, from the Cross, He rules, and His rule is obeyed by millions. Many try

to disbelieve these indisputable facts, but they **are** impregnable. They shuffle off the sweet bonds of faith, only to be shackled by the manacles of human opinion. They depart from the harbor of tranquillity, only to be cast upon the rocky, bleak promontories of doubt. They leave peace, but they find no rest beyond.

As for you and all other Catholics, there is no question of doubt. Millions have loved and adored the Infant of Bethlehem. Millions kneel to-day before the sacred shrines in which He stays for us, and give expression to their love and gratitude. Humbly they kneel—some with aching hearts, some with tears; but all with love for Jesus. Let us join with them, and from the deepest recesses of our hearts, exclaim :
“ *My Lord and my God !*”



SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

I am the Good Shepherd. (St. John x.—11.)

My Dear Friends: This beautiful expression, the subject of to-day's discourse, tells us of the benign watchfulness of Jesus over mankind. He represents Himself as a shepherd. Not one, however, who will abandon his flock in the time of danger; not the hireling whose interests are the wages received for his service. No; He says, "*I am the Good Shepherd*"; and immediately adds, "*The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.*" Our Divine Lord has shown Himself to be the Good Shepherd of the human race. If you want proofs of His goodness, behold the Infant Jesus shivering in the manger at Bethlehem. If you desire evidence of His magnanimous interest in His flock, look upon Him as He hangs on the cross. Here are convincing manifestations of His love. Jerusalem and all the places around that city have by His presence become sacred. No man spoke as He; no man evinced such unselfish concern in our race as He. The Crib of Bethlehem has made that town famous. The glories of ancient Rome, Corinth, and Athens, are vanquished by the destructive influence of time. But while their luster is a thing of the past, Bethlehem and Calvary will be ever sacred to Christians of every land and age. Why this wonderful deference? Why does the heart cling to these places, the

scenes of so much humiliation and cruelty ? It is needless to say that their immortality is due to the Good Shepherd. One is the place of His birth ; the other of His ignominious death. All the country was the scene of His labors and His love. Every spot upon which the Saviour trod is imperishable ; and its memory will be as enduring as the human race.

The Good Shepherd, Christ Jesus, tells us that He knows His sheep, and that they know Him. Here your minds revert to His vigilance. He knows everyone of His sheep. None can go astray without His being conscious of the loss. And how often He leaves the ninety-nine that are safe, to go in search of the lost one. "*I know Mine and Mine know Me.*" Yea, He should know them. He humiliated Himself to the lowest abjection for them. The cruel suffering of the cross was not considered too much. "*I lay down My life for My sheep.*" Nay, more than this He can say : for He has been a shepherd to you during your whole life. Has He not attended to your wants in every moment of your existence ? Can He not say to you : " I have watched over your cradle ; I have regenerated you at baptism. Then you began to know My kindness. You became My lambs. Heaven was promised to you, if you always remain within My fold. I shall adorn your countenance with every exalting virtue, and as long as you are obedient to My voice, on your 'brow shame will be ashamed to sit.' "

The Divine Shepherd may call your attention to another act of His watchfulness and care. In order that you may never separate from Him, He impresses upon your soul His love, and wishes you to be happy here as well as hereafter. For this purpose He points out the course over which He has conducted you : " I

have not left you after baptism, to battle alone with danger," He continues, "but I have watched over the years of your young life; and in due time I have led you to the sacred tribunal of penance. In this holy place My grace was once more infused into your young soul. I told you, then, that in sorrow and in trouble, in disappointment and in sin, you should always come to Me for counsel and aid. Should you go astray, should you spurn My kindness and minimize My goodness, listen to the voice of your Shepherd, and come to Me in the Sacrament of Penance. Here your sorrows will be turned into joys, and your past waywardness I will forget." You are not ignorant, my Christian friends, of this benevolent act of our Divine Shepherd's love. How often has He not gone after the strayed sheep, begging them to return—to return to His inexhaustable fountain of mercy, the Sacrament of Penance? Sometimes He pleads with the heart in the most endearing terms. He assures you of His affections. When this fails, He causes the heart to throb with sorrow, sometimes affliction, so that He may teach you your waywardness, point out the destruction which awaits you, and lead you back to the fold whence you separated. He takes you by the hand,—assures you there is no need of fear: "Confess your transgressions, be sorry for your sins, and we shall be friends again."

Along the journey of life, He does not for a moment abandon you. From the first cry of life to the last moan of death, He is with you. For the purpose of keeping before your eyes His ceaseless attachment to you as well as to encourage you, He has instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Having made you as spotless as an angel in the purifying waters of baptism, having conducted you to the refreshing channels of His

grace in the Sacrament of Penance, He now prepares your soul for another feast of His untiring love. He gathers you about Him as He once gathered the apostles, and bids you partake of His adorable body, blood, soul, and divinity. "*Take ye and eat,*" are His loving words. "Eat of this bread, and you shall never die. It will be your strength and solace in every vicissitude of fortune. When your feet are bruised on the craggy way of life, when thorns will pierce your hearts, when friends prove traitors, then remember *I am the Good Shepherd*. Come to Me, and I shall comfort you. Come to Me in Confession ; come to Me in the Holy Eucharist. Participate in My grace, and communicate with Me in the Sacrament of the Altar." Thus, my dear friends, He speaks to you ; thus He leads you through the tempests of life.

He says, moreover, "*Mine know Me.*"—" *I am the Good Shepherd ; I know mine and mine know Me.*" It follows from this that there are some whom He knows not, and these do not know Him. What is the cause ? Why do they not know Him ? Ah, the great barrier is sin. He has gone in quest of them often, but they hearkened not to His voice. He has begged of them to come to Him and find peace of soul and tranquillity of heart. But they refused. What a terrible thing it is by sin not to know God ! Once the sinner was a child of God. In its baptism it was immaculate—not a stain sullied the soul. But now it does not care to be one of the Saviour's flock. How many a Catholic has wandered far from the friendship and care of the Good Shepherd ! The soul is steeled with the wickedness of a sinful life. Bad company has dried up the fruitful grace with which the soul was once fertilized. Barrenness exists now, where formerly the richness of God's blessings abounded. Low motives have taken

the place of great and noble incentives. Honor has been expelled by profligacy ! The promises of youth have decayed before the blast of lust and intemperance ! The Good Shepherd seeks them, entreats them to return, and thus their offences will be buried in the depth of oblivion. They despised His call. Though once they were favored children of the Church, now they know not their Saviour and their God. How wretched must that one be, who rejects the generous offer of our Divine Lord. " I shall not go with you," he snarls ; " I know you not, nor do I care to know you. You promise peace, but I prefer the tortures of sin ! You point to heaven as my eternal home ; I point to hell as my preference ! I will not repent. Better for me to be in hell, than be with the virtuous and the good in heaven ! You show me the imprints of the nails in your hands, tokens of your love for me ; but I prefer to be a slave of Satan than a child of your affections ! " " O miserable sinner ! " you may exclaim, " how can you insult the majesty of God ? How can you abuse His goodness and disregard the preciousness of your own soul ? "

How low must that one have fallen ? Into what depths of debasement he must have sunk ? When our Saviour rejects him, and says : " I know you not ; you are not of My fold. I have fondled you in your infancy, I have nursed you in your childhood, I have blessed you in your youth with the blessing of every grace, but you have abandoned Me and persisted in your abandonment. I know you not. You will yet cry upon Me, but I shall not hear you. You shall die in your sins."

O stony-hearted ingrate ! how much you must have insulted your God of mercy and love, to force Him to pronounce such a malediction upon you ? You are

obstinate ; you are a fool in your wisdom ; your soul is marred by sin, and stultified by your vain efforts to deny the goodness of God. Boastfully you deny the providence of the Creator, and attempt to belittle the magnificent works of His hand. You may as well try to pluck the stars from the firmament, or prevent the dews of a summer morning. Your efforts are vain, and your life is a curse to the earth.

“ And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold ; they also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.” Yes, our Divine Lord will bring other sheep into His flock, who will appreciate His goodness and proclaim His praises. His unlimited mercies will be the theme of their eloquence and the hope of their lives ; profound gratitude will rise from their hearts, like holy incense. *There shall be only one fold and one shepherd.* What, then, about the negligent, unthankful Catholic who has wandered so far from the fold in which he was born, and in which he received so many blessings. This ingrate will be an outcast. Jesus, who died for him, will disown him. By the deformity of his countenance, the horrible condition of his soul will be known. Every opportunity was given him to return. In vain did the Good Shepherd plead with him to re-enter the fold which he left for the ways of sin and crime. His offences would have been blotted out, and all the joy of an innocent heart would have been bestowed upon him. Exhortation was ineffectual ; entreaty was no use ; his heart was like the marble. The gentle influence of divine grace fell upon his soul with as little effect as the dews upon the adamant rock. Honor, chastity, manhood, were to him powerless terms. Without the fold he lived, and an enemy

of God, he dies. O miserable life ! O wretched death !

Let me beseech you, my dear friends, to remember the lesson which this day's Gospel imparts. In every change of fortune, never forget your God. Should the withering blasts of adversity beat upon you, or the flattering wand of prosperity enlarge your coffers, never abandon your Good Shepherd, Christ Jesus. In success, do not be unmindful of the Creator of the wealth of heaven and earth ; nor in failure, be dispondent. Anchor your affection and your hope in the bosom of your Divine Benefactor. During life, let your highest ambition be to live within the fold ; then, dying, you shall rise to be ever united with Him beyond the grave, where He will reward you for your constancy.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep ; but the world shall rejoice ; and you shall be sorrowful ; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. (St. John xvi.—20.)

My Dear Friends : Our Divine Lord tells His Apostles that for a little while they will not see Him, and on this account their hearts will be sorrowful. He is to suffer—He is to be crucified. They shall commiserate His anguish ; they shall mourn His death ; they shall be sorrowful. But again in a little while, they shall see Him again. He shall rise gloriously from the tomb. He will banish their mourning ; their sorrow will be turned into joy. Again their Lord and Master will stand in their midst ; they will be electrified by His presence. Again they will listen to His voice and receive counsel from His instructions. They will be commissioned to tell all peoples of God's goodness, and teach them the words of eternal life.

They were sorrowful. Their hearts were troubled. They saw Him bound as a criminal and dragged to the seats of judgment. Wonderful humility, patient suffering, complete abjection, for the salvation of man ! They knew of His condemnation, heard of His painful death upon the cross. One of them, with His Mother, beheld the execution of that awful sentence. Were not their hearts sorrowful ? Wonder, indeed, that the

Mother's heart did not break from deepest grief ! But the world will rejoice. This is the way with the world. It has no time to lament over the sorrows of others. It has no heart, no sympathy. Here, however, while it does not sorrow, it will rejoice. Jesus dying in torments will ever be the cause of their joy. The redemption of the human race, the pardon of sin, the hope of eternal happiness, will be the perennial fountain of their joys. Limbo rejoiced ! The earth rejoiced ! Heaven itself rejoiced ! And this rejoicement sprang forth from the wounds of Jesus, as purest water springs from inexhaustible fountains to slake the thirst of the fatigued traveller in the desert of sorrow and sin. Since the first Good Friday, how many a sorrow has been turned into joy ; and since the first Good Friday, how many a sorrow has benumbed the heart !

It has been well. The sorrows of Jesus are the joys of poor, frail man ; and the sorrows of many men have been a solace and a pleasure to many others. Without sorrow, what a heartless, lifeless world ours would be ! No sympathy, no pitying emotions, no tender condolence. The heart would be cold. It would never vibrate with that soothing consolation which now distinguishes gentleness of heart, kindness for suffering, compassion for grief. Without sorrow, the heart would be povertible indeed. Sorrow is the keystone in the arch of the brotherhood of man. Take it away, and friendship falls, pathos falls, mercy falls, charity falls. You probably never reflected upon the great blessings of sorrow.

What about sorrow in works of literature and art ? Where would be the tender strains of Burns ? the affectionate outburst, the indignation, the love, and the plaintiveness ? Had not Ireland felt the pangs of

oppression, where would be the pathos of Ireland's harp and the dolefulness of Moore's song? Had Father Ryan, the poet-priest of the South, no sorrow, where would be these pure, humane, heaven-born outpourings of his troubled soul? Where would be those everlasting emotions of Petrarch, Milton, Shakespeare, and hundreds of others, which are now immortalized in verse for our culture and advancement? Those thoughts, rising forth from the wells of sorrow, are now our joy and our consolation. You may call it sentimentality, if you will; but this is the sentiment which refines, polishes, perfects the human heart, while it fertilizes the human soul. The world is better for such sorrow; the world is better for the voice of the poet; the world is better for all the lamentations recorded in the Sacred Books of the inspired writers. The Bible teaches as persuasively by its sorrows as by its joys. Yea, let me add, more efficaciously by its sorrows.

In painting, in these imperishable symbols of man's painted thought, how fruitful is sorrow! You admire the images of celebrated men and virtuous women, renowned for the grand part they took in something that interests mankind. But in a picture, the artist's genius is what's most admired. His skill in the delineation, his accuracy in representing character, his delicate coloring—in a word, his genius! Ah, were there no sorrow, where would be his genius! It is sorrow which stimulates his genius; it is sorrow which edifies his heart; it is sorrow which conceives in his soul these grand ideals; it is sorrow which gives them birth. Look at that pathetic picture, "Another Marguerite" is its name; stop but a moment before another, "The Death of Her First Born." I shall not ask you to examine others. These two are sufficient. Other

pictures may make you laugh ; these will make you weep, and you will be the better for these tears. Tell me not that the artist did not weep while giving expression to so much sorrow ; His soul was necessarily agitated to its depths. There, on canvas, are the conceptions of his genius ; and what overmastering conceptions they are ! Sorrow herself pleading for sympathy. Her supplications awakening every gentle, every responsive chord. The heart of the spectator is burdened, but the burden is sweet. He is now more responsive to the cry of want ; he feels now, more keenly than ever before, the moans of his unfortunate fellow-man. Ah, what an education ! What culture ! What refinement ! A whole life-time could not have had so much pure feeling for the woes of others ; could not have touched so effectually the chords of human sympathy. Surely the artist wept !

I shall not detain you by proving that these everlasting masterpieces of Titian, Raphael, Michael Angelo and others have had their origin in sorrow, though some are expressive of joy. Had Jesus never died, there would be no Resurrection ; had Mary, the Mother of Jesus, never endured the anguish of the cross, there would be no Coronation of Mary by the celebrated Titian. But let us return to the foot of the cross for a little contemplation. Where can a more sorrowful scene be witnessed ?—the gentle, the good, the merciful, dead on the cross ! Look at the anguish settled upon His sacred countenance ; note every wound of every scourge ! Observe the gash made by the lance ! See the blood trickling from His hands and feet ! Mark where the crown of thorns pressed upon His sacred head ! Surely the chalice of sorrow was consumed by Him in all its bitterness. There was no sor-

row like unto His—sorrow produced by pain, sorrow caused by ingratitude, and this was the cruelest of all. Still, what joy comes from that sorrow. The world rejoices, the world has rejoiced, the world will rejoice ; and all this rejoicement springs from His sorrow ! The martyrs rejoiced, the saints rejoiced. Every wound upon the sacred body proclaims joy to every Christian, pardon to every sinner, mercy to every penitent,—and all these the messengers of joy to every afflicted heart ! From these speechless wounds come forth the language of most soothing joy. A Magdalene still finds joy in these sacred feet ! A Peter still finds the joy of repentance in those sorrowful eyes. The sinner's tears are turned into pearls of joy ; punishment into pardon ; despair into hope ! The princess and negro girl, the emperor and the wretch, the saint and the sinner, draw the inspirations of joy from their crucified Lord. “ *The world will rejoice,*” yea, rejoice in its new life ! The child will rejoice when Jesus enters his soul for the first time in Holy Communion. The contrite penitent will rejoice as he leave sthe sacred tribunal of penance. The dying will rejoice as they fix their last gaze upon eternity, and thoughts of their crucified Jesus arise to encourage hope and guarantee mercy. Earth, purgatory, even heaven rejoices, at the victory won by Jesus, and at the mercy, the pardon, the love bestowed upon poor, sorrowful man.

You perceive now that sorrow is not the worst misfortune which may befall you. Ofttimes instead of it being a misfortune, it is a blessing. It is only when the rose is bruised that it exhales its perfumes. It is only when the heart is crushed that it breathes forth its sweetest expressions ; and then, too, it is that another heart often vibrates in purest sympathy. Prostrated

and crushed, the heart gives voice to notes of human feeling which sound and resound forever. Prostrated and crushed, the heart drinks solace and resignation from the fountain sources of heaven. Prostrated and crushed, the heart finds shelter in the bleeding heart of its dying Saviour !

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

But when He, the Spirit of truth, shall come, He will teach you all truth. (St. John xvi.—13.)

My Dear Friends : There are many who disbelieve the Catholic Church. They say she teaches errors ; that she is an incapable guide ; that she is antagonistic to free institutions ; that her doctrine is false. But note the words of our Divine Lord: "*When He, the Spirit of truth, shall come, He will teach you all truth.*" How, then, can any reasonable thinker maintain that the doctrine of the Church is false. The Holy Ghost is her guide and teacher. He imparts to her the knowledge of these truths, which are essential in advancing civilization, in sustaining free institutions, and in preserving the Church of God on earth. You may retort : "We concede that the Holy Spirit teaches truth, but the Catholic Church is deaf to His divine teachings ; she abuses truth and inculcates errors." Let me call your attention to another promise made by the Son of God to His Church. In the Gospel, according to St. Matthew (xxviii.—20), Jesus says to His Apostles : "*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*" Now, every Christian concedes that Jesus Christ is God, equal to His Father : then He must know all things ;

therefore He must know at the time He made the promise which I have just quoted for you, that the Catholic Church would teach during all future time. He knew this because He knows all things. How could He have espoused the cause of error? Could He say: "*Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,*" if He knew that the Catholic Church would deviate from her glorious mission and associate herself with infamy and sin? He could not; still, He must have known this, if it were ever to take place. Therefore, it never did take place, never will take place, because the Son of God, Jesus Christ, declared to His infant Church: "*I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*" To say that Jesus could remain with so nefarious an organization as that which imparts falsehood, as that which mutilates the divine commission to mankind, is blasphemy. Such an imputation strikes at the divinity of Jesus Christ—denys that He is God!

"*By their fruits you shall know them.*"—"A good tree cannot yield bad fruit." (Math. vii.—16 and 18.) It is thus with the Catholic Church—she cannot yield bad fruit; that is, her doctrine must remain undefiled. Jesus has enveloped her in the armor of truth, while the Holy Ghost infuses into her spirit courage and fidelity, vigor and infallibility. For almost nineteen centuries she has borne upon her banner the escutcheon of truth. Through all the storms—political, civil, and religious—she has clung to her Guide, and He to her. She has civilized barbarians; she has championed the cause of the oppressed and restrained the tyranny of despots. She is the mother of art, science, and literature. She taught the ignorant when Protestantism was unknown. She legislated wisely amid con-

fusion. She triumphed over every discordant element.

"By their fruits you shall know them." Permit me to request you to compare the fruits of Protestantism with those of Catholicity. But first let me remind you that I am not instituting this comparison to hurt the feelings of people who may differ with me. God forbid that I should ever be so inconsiderate as not to respect the feelings and opinions of the well-meaning. The object I have in view is to instruct, not to irritate. Now observe the contentions and divisions in Protestantism. Presbyterians differ with Methodists; Baptists with Lutherans; and thus the dissension goes on, every sect disagreeing with every other. Nor is it uncommon to see the members of any one sect quarrelling among themselves as to what is doctrine and what is not. God is not the author of dissensions, but of harmony. There is system and harmony in all His works. The fruits of Protestantism are discord, disunion, and disbelief. Do not understand me to mean that Protestants are vile people. There are good and bad among them. Some very excellent persons are Protestants. Some of my very best friends are Protestants. But I am not considering individuals. I am now comparing religious systems. In Catholicism, all is unity; in Protestantism, all is dissension. In Catholicism, all is concord; in Protestantism, everything is discord. Protestantism has the inherent elements of decay; Catholicism possesses the principles of endurance. Protestantism, existing for only three centuries, is like a piece of glass broken into innumerable fragments; Catholicism is an adamantine rock, enduring for nineteen centuries, and rendered inseparable by the expressed command of the Son of God.

"By their fruits you shall know them." Ask an intel-

ligent Protestant, whence the tree of Protestantism sprang, and he will point you to Germany and England. Ask him who planted this tree, and he will tell you Martin Luther of Germany, and Henry VIII. of England. Ask him why they planted this ; and, if candid, he will tell you rebellion against legitimate authority was the cause. Inquire of a Catholic, whence sprang the tree of Catholicism, and he will point you to heaven. Inquire of him, who planted this tree, and he will answer, Jesus, the Saviour of mankind. Inquire of him, why the tree was planted, and he will respond : “ To bring forth fruit in abundance for human society and the society of heaven.” How many have been nourished by this fruit ! How many saints and martyrs ! How many scholars and poets, painters and sculptors ! The rich and the poor, the weak and the strong, the young and the aged, have partaken of this fruit. Whatever Protestantism has good, in doctrine, the Catholic Church has this, and more, too.

This is the inevitable consequence. It could not be otherwise, considering the promise made by the Saviour of the human race. Bear in mind His words : “ *But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I have said to you, and behold I am with you even to the consummation of the world.*” How sad it is that all do not belong to the one true Catholic Church ! How many great-souled, generous-hearted Protestants there are who would make devout Catholics ! With what devotion they would kneel before the Blessed Sacrament ! How ardently they would pray ! With what zeal they would attend the most adorable sacrifice of the Mass ! They would be a source of much edification to some indifferent Catholics. They would

stimulate these to arduous efforts in the service of God.

Ah, it is a pity Protestants do not reflect upon the grandeur of the Catholic Church and her divine commission. Were they only to ponder carefully the vast influence of the Church upon society ; were they only to compare unbiasedly her immense superiority over Protestantism ; were they only to weigh prudently the authority of both and the sources of this authority, they would be drawn irresistibly to the bosom of the old Church. Reason would indicate to them the true path to religious peace, while the Spirit of God would illumine their intellect and move their will to return to the Mother whom their ancestors many years ago abandoned.

But some one may reply : "Ah, this is all very good ; still there are many bad Catholics." Yes, we answer ; and the charge is as true as it is deplorable. Yet it must be remembered that many a good house has a bad tenant ; that among the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus Himself, one was a devil ; that in every town and city the infamous exist as well as the virtuous. Again, Protestants will admit that there are among themselves many of the vilest ; that Catholics make great efforts to attain to righteousness ; that in the most tempestuous weather Catholic churches are filled with the devout faithful, while their churches are nearly empty. Nor should they forget that human nature is frail. The good and the bad have always been, and will continue to be, until the "crack of doom." Moreover, the Redeemer said : "*I came not to call the righteous, but the sinner, to repentance.*" And just here, mark the charity of the Catholic Church. True to the teachings of her divine Founder, she does not neglect the wayward and the sinner ; she does not cast a cold, unfriendly glance upon

the poor,—but she cares for all. Many Protestant Churches have regard only for the rich and the influential. They are called in many places the churches of the rich. The Catholic Church, however, sees in every human being an immortal soul—immortal and priceless—a soul for which Jesus died. She takes that soul, poor and sinful as it may be, cherishes it for Jesus' sake and its own advancement, and in the end that weak, sinful soul may be a saint. How parental! What a patient tutor! How much like her Eternal Guide, Jesus, the Benefactor of infirm human nature!

This is not her policy for to-day or yesterday. This has been her policy since Jesus told her to teach and convert all nations. She has been always faithful to His command. She has not harmed wealth, but she has always defended poverty. She did not destroy the powerful, still her voice was ever raised in defence of the oppressed. She protected all. Labor and capital were friends. The representatives of both knelt before the same altar, and adored the same God in the same manner. There were, when she alone ruled the destinies of Christians, no socialists, no anarchists. Justice ruled in the bench, and charity in her asylums. Man was then nearer the brotherhood of man than now.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

But I tell you the truth ; it is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you ; but if I go, I will send Him to you. (St. John xvi.—7.)

My Dear Friends : Our Saviour called the Apostles' attention to His glorious Ascension and the necessity thereof. He is about to depart from them, and their hearts are sorrowful. Into their bosoms He pours the balm of divine consolation. He will not leave them alone. The Paraclete will come to drive away sorrow and inspire fortitude. There are many things of which He would speak, but now they cannot bear them. They are mourning over the thought of separation, and are unfit at this time to receive further instructions concerning the great mission to be undertaken by them. This sadness is natural enough. They have been in the company of their Master for some years. Perhaps they could not explain the influence which bound Him to them, and affected every fibre of their nature. The presence of the Lord of heaven and earth among them, and the power of that presence, permeated their entire being. How sublime an honor was bestowed upon them ! how wonderful they were exalted by the companionship of Jesus ! how the world might well envy their pre-eminence ! The benign bonds of grace held them to Him. The strongest and purest ties of friend-

ship drew the Master and His disciples together in the holy cause of regeneration. Now, having accomplished the redemption of man, He is soon to return to the bosom of His Eternal Father ; but He will not leave the Apostles without a guide : He will send them the Paraclete, who will enrich their souls with His sevenfold gifts.

After the Ascension the Apostles were timid, as the Scriptures testify. They were enclosed in a room, hidden, lest they might provoke the spleen of the Jews, and be consequently punished—probably put to death. They were fearful of danger ; but after the descent of the Holy Ghost, they knew no danger and feared no resentment. They were inflamed with a holy fervor to preach Jesus Crucified ; and, if need be, die for the faith they taught. Now these gifts which the Apostles received from the Holy Spirit, were also given to you in Confirmation, if you were worthy of them. Everyone of you were favored according to your worthiness and your wants in life. These gifts, as you remember from your Catechism, are : wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety, and the fear of the Lord. Hence the Sacred Scriptures teach, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. This is self-evident to anyone who will give himself the trouble of honest contemplation. The fear of the Lord conducts you judiciously through the dangerous storms of life, to the home in heaven for which you are destined. A merchant fears the disasters of mercantile business, is cautious on this account, and succeeds by means of his prudence. The sailor fears the destructive tempest, takes precaution, and saves himself and cargo. And it is so in all human affairs. A well-regulated fear brings the rewards of wisdom to those who wait assiduously

upon her. Some say that God is a God of love and therefore need not be feared. Indeed, it seems to me, on this very account, we ought to fear to offend His love and provoke His justice. By the fear of God is not meant a cringing, cowardly timidity, but a reverential awe for the majesty of God and a detestation for everything which insults His love. Not that fear with which the poet Burns was tormented when he cried :

“O Thou, unknown cause of all my hope and fear,
In whose dread presence ere long I must appear !”

No ; but that fear which, while it guards against transgression of God’s law, shields us from the misfortunes of a sinful life. This is true wisdom ; for it is unwise to enkindle, by our evil deeds, the wrath of a loving God.

Permit me to direct your attention a little farther in the consideration of this gift of the Holy Ghost—wisdom. You should not confound wisdom with knowledge. A man may be an encyclopædia of information, and still have very little wisdom. Instead of his knowledge being useful to him, it may be an injury or a burden to him. A store-house of unwieldy knowledge is like an army of undisciplined soldiers. It has the appearance of strength, but in reality it is weak and without purpose or power. And if knowledge is of the destructive sort, it may be compared to an army in a state of mutiny. Wisdom it is which systematizes, governs, and directs knowledge. It is to knowledge what an intelligent agent is to the application of steam, or any other force of Nature. Wisdom selects the best means to arrive at the most advantageous ends. It is the queen, or should be, of all intellectual activity. It is the great power which has elevated nations to the zenith of their grandeur, and given them

a history as inextinguishable as it is glorious. Their growth and prosperity were due to their wise rulers. And if powerful nations have declined, their decay was owing to their disregard of wisdom. "*Love the light of wisdom,*" says the Book of Wisdom (vi.—23.), "*all ye that bear rule over people.*" Again the Sacred Scriptures impress upon us the necessity of wisdom, by saying : "*Wisdom is glorious, and never fadeth away, and is easily seen by them that love her, and is found by them that seek her.*" (B. Wisdom vi.—13.) And here is another truthful maxim : "*Wisdom is better than strength, and a wise man is better than a strong man.*"

We must not confuse wisdom with understanding, either. You may be able to understand, analyze, examine many things, and yet be unable to apply them, or anything else, meritoriously. But, while knowledge and understanding are not wisdom, the wise man possesses sufficient of both : for knowledge and understanding are the honored servants of wisdom. It may be well to add here that, while the perfection of wisdom is a gift of the Holy Spirit, the principle itself is created by Him in the soul of man : it is a part of that wonderful creation with which man's intellect is endowed by Almighty God. This idea induces us to reflect upon the results of wisdom in the temporal and spiritual affairs of life. This gift of the Holy Ghost strengthens, enlarges, and beautifies the spark of divinity within us. It enables us the better to succeed in all the concerns of human action. To be sure, all this presupposes an ardent desire to receive the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, with a continual compliance to His holy will.

You may now be inclined to reply : "Oh, how can a person succeed in many of the occupations of everyday life, if he carefully observes the teachings of the

Holy Ghost and the maxims of wisdom? We must contend with those who have little or no regard for the precepts of religion ; we must be engaged in business with the rough and the rascal ; we have to meet dishonest competition ; and in order to do this well, we are compelled to use their weapon to defend ourselves."

Now, all this seems plausible enough ; but you are never to forget that there is a God. This truth you ought to engrave upon your soul so deeply, that its obliteration would be impossible. God is the Author of all wise, legitimate law. He knows the past, He sees the future. To err is beyond His domain. He is the source of all wisdom. The whole universe—all creation moves and acts in accordance to His will. You must not only admit these truths—you must admire the works of His hand and the wisdom which directs them. Considering these things, is it possible for you to conclude that uncreated wisdom could make a law or command you to obey a precept injurious to you ? Does He not understand the present condition of things among the nations of the earth ? Did He not always know the present state of affairs ? Can he not discriminate between honesty and dishonesty, between right and wrong ? Most assuredly. The one who shapes his conduct in conformity with His law, is wise ; and will prosper. While he admires the wisdom of God, as manifested in all these phenomena coming under his observation, he does not fail to see that the one who obeys the divine law, lives and acts in the universal harmony of things. The dishonest man may prosper for a time, but his prosperity will have an end, and during even its continuance he will have very little joy.

If you examine the moral and religious aspect of life, you will easily discover how essential is wisdom for the

sustenance of every elevating virtue ; and how indispensable it is for a defense against the numerous enemies of morality and religion. Material prosperity, as lasting as it is great, depends also no less upon the wisdom of the possessor, than does moral advancement. A man may be wise, yet poor. Another may be rich, yet unwise. The former drudges in poverty, but has wealth in the fruit of his soul and in avoiding the wrecking disasters of life ; the latter abounds in opulence, yet is ruined in the shoals of his presumptuous pride. This one is unhappy ; that one is contented as far as this world allows mortals to be. But above and beyond the transitory things of this life, the wise man is investing his capital in good works, which bring an everlasting interest. He is honored by those who know him, and will be rewarded hereafter by the God of wisdom. "*Oh, how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory!*" says the Book of Wisdom (iv.—1), "*for the memory thereof is immortal ; because it is known both with God and with man.*"

We should learn, then, to listen to the voice of wisdom. We should pray to the Holy Ghost to instil it into our souls, to teach us every day its beautiful ways, and to assist constantly in shaping our conduct in accordance to its sublime maxims. In the ordinary affairs of life, it is useful ; but in the momentous concerns of earth and heaven, it is incomparable. May Thou, O Holy Spirit, infuse into our souls a love for this, your great gift ! May it direct us from the monster of moral decay ! In the torturing dilemmas of our earthly existence, may the refulgence of Thy wisdom be the light to guide us to the haven of tranquillity ; and in death, may Thou lead us to the sanctuary where Eternal Wisdom resides !

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

But these things I have told you ; that when the hour of them shall come, you may remember that I told you. (St. John xvi.—4.)

Now, my dear friends, what were the things of which our Divine Lord told the Apostles ? You need not be informed that He spoke to them of the troubles they were to meet. He told them of the ingratitude they may expect—of persecutions, of revilings, of imprisonment, and death. He told them these things, that, when they came to pass, they would not be discouraged. In these injuries and abuse they would remember the words of their Lord and Master: "*Because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*" (St. John xv.—19.) "*If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.*" (St. John xv.—20.) Jesus, in this way, addressed His Apostles, and through them the Church in every age. Discord and persecution are characteristic features of the Church's suffering ; and in the divine economy, are necessary for the purity and endurance of His Church. "*The servant is not greater than his Lord.*" Jesus set the example ; none of His followers suffered more than He.

Marvellous, indeed, is the faith and fortitude implanted by the Holy Ghost in His Church. When one pon-

ders upon her history and views the many vicissitudes of fortune through which she has passed, he is astonished at her vitality, and acknowledges her divine commission. Who, gazing upon the two wanderers, Sts. Peter and Paul, upon the Appian Way, could have guessed their mission or predicted their success. Two strangers with the command of their Master impelling them onward, journeyed toward the city of the Cæsars. They were weary, and probably hungry. They were the representatives of the infant Church,—poor, unknown, unlettered men on a mission to the proudest city on earth. How could they curb the crimes prevailing there? Who would listen to their discourses upon the Crucified Jesus? They were an incredulous people glorying in the strength of their armies, the intellectual achievements of their most celebrated sons, and their extensive conquests. Why should they hearken to the voice of such pilgrims? What could they teach them which they did not know? One thing, truly—God. They knew very little, if anything, about Him. But they had their pagan gods, and they were satisfied with them,—they wanted none other. Moreover, the things which the strangers taught were so difficult to understand. Some of them were called mysteries; and like the agnostic of our day, they cared little for what they could not get within their intellectual grasp. But Rome yielded;—a persuasive argument to the unbelievers and skeptics of our time, that Jesus conquered, that the Nazarene triumphed,—one of the most cogent proofs of the divinity of Christ and the imperishable existence of His Church! These may scoff at the Catholic religion; they may boast of their endowments and exalt their incredulity; but the Church has outlived many a scoffer. The rarest mental attainments have been, and still are, in her possession, and she

has seen proud incredulity humbled and dispersed.

Thinking upon the early history of the Church, the unbiased are compelled to admire the faith and praise the courage of these two dauntless men. As the Catholic sees for the first time the road upon which they walked to Rome, the prison in which they were confined and the places of their execution, an awe overspreads his soul, and unconsciously he is meditating upon the past. He follows the two saints on their way and into the city ; wonders at what happened ; surmises the information which he seeks, but cannot obtain. He is in the misty past. The haze of centuries obscures his vision, and he endeavors to connect by inference, the special events of their teaching in the eternal city. He looks upon these ancient ruins. They have crumbled into decay. St. Peter and Paul, he says to himself, looked upon these same structures. These ruins were then glorious ; the conqueror passed under this triumphal arch. Cæsar was entertained in that amphitheatre ; Cicero's eloquence resounded in that great forum. But the forum is in ruins, the amphitheatre is crumbling, the triumphal arch is in decay ; but there is St. Peter's raising its magnificently crowned head to the skies, proving to us that the commission of Sts. Peter and Paul has not failed, that their teaching conquered—that Rome is Catholic !

They suffered, it is true ; suffering is a special mark of the true Church ; Jesus foretold it, and the history of the Church shows that His prediction is verified. In every age the Church has had her sorrows. If pagan emperors were not persecuting her, heresy was striving to sap away her life's blood ; if barbarians were not devastating Rome, schism was plundering her achievements and retarding her progress ; if Luther was not laboring to destroy her, some of her own members were

planning discord and fermenting quarrels ; but over all these obstacles she has risen, the unspotted spouse of Christ, the living evidence of His prophecy. In the present century, France, the eldest daughter of the Church, has plundered her churches, destroyed her revenues, and murdered her priests. The Kulturkamps in Germany, imprisoned her clergy, banished her religious, and confiscated her property. In England, you have heard the no-popery cry, or you have read about it. In our own beloved country, we have had the Know-Nothings ; and now the A. P. As. are swearing vengeance against her, while the Junior Order of American Mechanics holds it is a crime for nuns to wear their habits in the public school. The consequence of which is that Gov. Hastings has immortalized his name by placing his signature to a bill hatched by the Junior Order, nurtured by fanatics, and sponsored by religious hatred. The cry was no popery, now the cry is no Bible ; but the Church goes steadily onward, pitying and praying for her persecutors.

Catholics sometimes complain that they have many obstacles to surmount on account of their religion ; that this is a barrier to their advancement. No doubt this complaint is true. Others are preferred to them. They are debarred from the offices of State, because those prejudiced against their religion will not support them in time of elections. Others, again, meet opposition from employers for the same reason. Still, my Christian friends, you should not be downcast or discouraged by such unfriendliness. As Catholics, you may expect the same or similar persecutions as the Church whose principles you profess. As followers of Christ, as Catholics, you must encounter such opposition. Imitate the Church ; learn to be patient ; draw

consolation from the sufferings of your Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Be faithful to Him, and remember that persecution purifies you. There is another life beyond the grave, another Judge of human merit, another Ruler Who spurns injustice and rewards the faithful.

Besides, you ought not forget that persecutions have purified the Church and increased the fidelity of her children. From every assault she has come forth stronger than she was before the attack. The same holds good in respect to every Catholic who adheres to her teachings. They may be harassed by disappointments and oppositions, but these things, if they are faithful, will only augment their fortitude and develop their resolution. The intellect becomes stronger, the great powers of the soul are made more resplendant, while the heart is cultivated to feel for the wrongs of others. Toil, toil, toil under the auspices of honest motive, and your adversaries will acknowledge your honesty and admire your determination. By an honorable life, you can do much to dispel prejudice and win esteem. Your very opponents, at least many of them, have a keen perception of worth and a generous regard for fidelity. Dissipate their errors, and you will find them the best of friends.

One fierce obstacle which many Catholics meet, arises from the irregularities of some Catholics. All are judged by some, from the actions of a few bad or indifferent Catholics. Were all to obey faithfully the teachings of the Church, imitate the life of Christ, there would not be so much prejudice or opposition. A tricky, insincere, dishonest Catholic brings opprobrium upon a whole parish or a whole city. Catholics, for their own honor, should not sustain such a person ;

but should be the first to teach him that his low craft is insupportable. Then you learn from the opposition which you yourselves encounter, to treat others fairly. Never attempt to build your reputation upon the ruins of others. An injustice to anyone is a violation of God's law, and will necessarily bring retribution ; and the attempt to advance yourselves at the expense of others, ill-becomes a follower of Christ. Such advancement is only a deterioration from all the noble principles which ought to actuate a Catholic in all his dealings.

Be careful that your failures are not caused by your own faithlessness, indolence, insobriety, or dishonesty. Many a person attributes his difficulties to others, or to the fact that he is a Catholic. But were the true cause to be ascertained, it would be found to reside in himself. He is too smart, as they say. He thinks none can perceive his questionable cunningness ; still they do, and he finds it out to his sorrow. Such a Catholic wrongs himself and injures others. Let your motto be : fairness to everyone. You will in this way not only help yourselves, but you will assist many others to employment.

Should you, nevertheless, suffer from religious opposition, fear not. Every faithful disciple of Jesus has had to endure more or less opposition. He has told you these things, so that when they occur you will remember His words. The history of the Church is a recital of sorrows and opposition ; she looks to her Divine Master for support and guidance ; and He came to her when the storm was the fiercest, and she rode the billows in safety. Again I say to you, imitate her example, and Jesus will allay your difficulties and assist you in surmounting all obstacles.

FEAST OF PENTECOST.

But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.
(St. John. xiv.—26.)

My Dear Friends : The mission of our Divine Lord was to redeem man, to instruct him, and to give him the means by which he could attain to everlasting happiness. It was not His purpose to save the people only of His time ; such exclusiveness is incompatible with the mercy of God. God's love extends to all mankind without exception. He desires all to be saved from the tempests of time, that after the storms they may enjoy their reward. He came on earth, therefore, to purify the soul of man from the curse of original sin, and to establish a Church in which the glory of His name, the merits He had won, the influence of His power, should be perpetuated. For this end He organized a Church, commanding it to teach His word, and gave to this Church a pledge of His everlasting support. "*The Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things.*" These are the words of the unerring God. In St. Matthew, xxviii., 20, the same infallible voice says : "*Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*" Again He says : "*Peter, upon this rock I shall build*

My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." These guarantees of God's presence in His Church, of His ceaseless aid, of His incessant protection, are verified by sacred and profane history.

No Christian can question the veracity of God's word ; but should unbelievers deny the Scriptures, let them examine the history of nations during the last nineteen centuries, and tell us whether they are able to discover anything so marvellous in its nature as the perpetuity of the Catholic Church. Repeatedly have the storms broken upon her, but instead of destroying, they trained the pilots of Peter's barque to ride the waves and master the elements of convulsive society. Throughout the various changes of unstable human nature, throughout the reigns of treachery within her fold and without, amidst dissensions and against hostilities, she has lived and flourished. This miraculous existence must enlist the attention of even her enemies, while it is a proof of her divine establishment as well as an assurance of her deathlessness.

Now, were I to ask you : why are you created ? Your answer would be : all mankind is created to love God on earth and be eternally happy with Him in heaven. How can man love God ? By knowing Him, and obeying His will. Where can he obtain the knowledge of God ? In the Catholic Church ;—“ *I shall send the Holy Ghost, who will teach you all things, and behold I shall be with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*” How may I be able to obey Him ? By being a dutiful child of the Church which He organized. As of old, Noah and his family were saved from the universal destruction of the deluge, so everyone who desires to be saved from endless perdition ought to enter the ark of salvation, the Catholic

Church. You may inquire, "cannot some reach heaven by other means?" To this we must answer, that it is not in the power of man to determine. The answer to such a question should be referred to Almighty God. What He may in His mercy confer on those who are in good faith, but not members of the old Church, is not within the grasp of man to solve. This, however, is true, that He established a Church, gave it authority to teach, marked out its mission and destiny. It follows, then, that He has bestowed upon the human race the means of salvation, and that He expects all who desire to attain to the realization of His promise, will avail themselves of these means.

God has, then, instituted a Church. By following her laws, our temporal and spiritual needs, inasmuch as they pertain to our well-being here and hereafter, will be supplied. But which is this Church? There are many churches now. Which is the true Church? It requires no demonstration to prove that the Catholic Church is the one delegated by the Son of God to teach, and is, therefore, the true Church and the only true Church. This may sound harsh to some good people educated in the views maintained by their parents, and taught to them by their ministers; still it is the truth. If any of our modern establishments declare such not to be the case, we ask them, when did the Saviour tell them to go and teach? When did He declare to them: "*The Holy Ghost will teach you all things, and I Myself shall abide with you forever.*" Neither to Luther nor to Calvin, neither to Henry VIII. nor any other of the so-called reformers, did He speak thus. The Catholic Church was commissioned by the Saviour of mankind. She existed before all of her claimants. She was present at the Last Supper.

She stood at the foot of the Cross. She rejoiced at the Resurrection, and with doleful contemplation, beheld the Ascension. She taught the Jew in his chief cities. Where the eloquence of Grecian orators was applauded, her voice was heard, speaking the goodness and mercies of the Crucified Saviour. Where Roman power, munificence, and learning were concentrated, she feared not to denounce paganism and preach the doctrine intrusted to her. In these early centuries where were these modern disciples of contentious opinions, of free thought, of a go-as-you-please sort of religion? They were unborn. Some can trace their origin to some three centuries ago; others are but of yesterday. Compare the oldest with the Catholic Church, and they are only infants. But time is not the principal factor in the demonstration. When and where, we demand, did they receive the order to teach? What guarantee can they give to their followers that they were invited by heaven to instruct in new forms and new ceremonies and new opinions? This is an important affair to every Protestant. Would our non-Catholic friends be as indifferent in researches appertaining to their temporal affairs? We believe not; yet, when a Catholic priest essays to call their attention to things of so great moment, some will charge him with unkindness, or attribute his motives to bigotry or hatred. We know not what a priest would gain by thus provoking his well-meaning Protestant neighbors, unless it be their rancor and displeasure. Still, in charity, the Church must call attention to her divine commission, invite all to become her children, hold out the grand inducement to re-enter the spiritual home which they left.

One ponderous distinction between the Catholic Church and the doctrines of other Christian bodies, is

the infallibility of that society organized by Jesus and sustained by His unremitting power. It is not my purpose to discuss the dogma of infallibility upon this occasion. I shall only give you a simple illustration which will point out to you the truth I wish to convey. Supposing, now, I am a sincere person without religion, but am desirous to become a Christian and serve God the remainder of my days. I have given the subject serious thought. My mind is disturbed by my scruples and doubts. I have resolved to seek advice. I approach a Presbyterian minister. I tell him of the torture of my heart and the confusion of my soul. I say to him : " Reverend friend, can you direct me into the path of salvation ? Can you calm this agitated breast ? Can you infuse into my poor, distracted soul, hope and security ? I wish to become a Christian, but know not which denomination to join." My Presbyterian friend assures me he can give tranquillity to my mind. " Join my church," he continues, " and you will find rest for your soul. You will then be a Christian and a child of God." But nervous investigation has made me doubtful and inquisitive ; and I beg of him to give me some proofs of his ability to guide me to God. He speaks to me of God, of the necessity of my becoming a Christian, of the admonitions of St. Paul, and tells me he conducted many on their journey to heaven. I ask him how, and inquire what is the nature of his chart. He shows it to me, explains it to me, and affirms that thereon are the principles of salvation. But I noticed a divergence of lines from different points. Though in search of religion, I am not entirely ignorant of the things about me, and I inquire : what do these branch lines indicate ? He answers : " These are the result of the underlying principle of Protest-

antism—private judgment. We glory in the freedom of the intellect. Everyone ought to read the Bible and judge for himself. There is no bondage in speculation among Protestants.”—“Ah, I see,” is my reply. “These diverging lines indicate the First Presbyterian Church, and the Second Presbyterian Church, and the United Presbyterian Church, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and so on. Here, I observe, is where you began about three centuries ago. Since then you have divided and subdivided often. All this seems strange to me. I thought divine truth is something like mathematical truth—unchangeable ; but I discern there is much misunderstanding expressed by your chart. Yet are you sure you can lead me safely ?” He declares he can—that I shall be secure with him. You cannot make a mistake about this matter ? I ask. “Not any,” is his answer. Then you can direct me infallibly in all spiritual difficulties, I urge. “Oh, no ; not infallibly—we do not claim infallibility. That’s a foolish claim. It is used as a disguise to mislead men and abuse their credulity.”—“Then you may err after all,” I surmised. “After all my anxiety and hope, I am as perplexed as before. I shall reflect upon what you say, and shall continue to investigate.”

I am dissatisfied. I seek for an unerring guide. I call upon a Methodist divine. My misgivings and my solicitude to reach my heavenly home, are frankly laid before him. He avers that in his religion I shall find consolation and safety. But, I remark : “Reverend, friend, it is natural that I would be somewhat skeptical ; I have not been reared a Christian. I have read considerable, and have weighed, and think I weighed, the religious question carefully. The consequence is that instead of becoming satisfied, I have grown more trou-

bled. Will you be so kind as to tell me your authority, and give me some guarantee of my security in your church ?” He takes the Bible ; tells me that this is his guide ; that it contains the precepts of salvation. I thoughtlessly inquire how he knows it possesses the maxims of religion. “ Why, you silly man,” he replies, this is the word of God.” This caustic answer nettles me somewhat, and awakens in me a propensity to differ. “ Where did you get the Bible ?” I continue. “ Where did I get it ? Why I bought it, to be sure.”—“ Pardon me,” I respond ; but what is its origin ? who is the author ?”—“ Why, God is the author, and it contains the revealed mind of God.”—“ But you did not get it from God, did you ? Methodism is only about one hundred and fifty years old, and I understand it is some nineteen centuries since Christ preached. Who had the Bible before the beginning of Methodism ? Where was it kept ?”—“ Ah, it was kept hidden by the Popish Church for many ages, until Protestantism restored it to its lawful place among all Christians.”—“ Ah, I see you got it from the Catholics. They were not so bad after all ; they might have destroyed it entirely. It is a wonder they didn’t, since it appears its teachings are antagonistic to Popery.”

“ You teach from the Bible ; but you will excuse me when I say that it always has seemed strange to me, that all religious denominations teach from the Bible, and yet they differ with each other. In Methodism you have various divisions or churches. Is not this strange ? Will you please explain this difficulty to me ?”—“ This is due to our capacity to judge for ourselves,” he responded. “ In the dark ages of Popery, all were obliged to believe as Romanism dictated. Man was a slave. Protestantism opened a new era of

thought. It dispelled the gloom of superstition and idolatry. It made man free.”—“Made man free?” I subjoined. “Yes,” he replied; “made man free; gave freedom of thought to his intellect, and permitted him to investigate as far as he pleased.”—“A part of this appears incredible to me,” I answered, “for I think a man is not always free to think as he pleases. You are not free to think that two and two make five, nor are you free to maintain that a right angle is more or less than ninety degrees. And this is true of all mathematics. I always was under the impression that divine truth must be similar. If God has spoken, He must have uttered the truth; and that truth once known, it cannot be rejected by the intellect. The intellect is not free, according to its own laws and existence; it is not free to say the false is true and the true is false.”

He was perplexed at this, but resumed the dialogue by saying, that the Bible is the word of God and the only means of salvation. I asked him whether there was any danger of his being led astray in his interpretation of the Bible. “None whatever,” was his answer. Then I intimated that he taught the Bible with mathematical correctness; or in other words, he taught infallibly. “No,” was his laconic reply. “We are not infallible. Infallibility is a doctrine of Romanism to enslave the intellectual faculties, to prevent investigations, to cloak hypocrisy, to hide errors, and promote priest-craft;—no, we have none of that abomination.” In place of tranquillity, I was becoming more disturbed. Here was a man who claimed he did teach infallibly, and at the same time argued he did not teach infallibly. Well, I thought to myself, I shall make a call upon popery. It will be a means

or investigation, and at worst, matters cannot be **more** confused with me.

I set out in quest of the guide claiming infallibility. I meet her. She is venerable from age, but the vigor of youth is upon her brow. I speak to her of the feverishness of my brain and of the anxiety of my heart. I beg of her to counsel me, if she is able. She replies : " My child, faith is a gift from God. You must ask Him for this blessing. Prayer, alms-deeds, and fasting are the channels through which you can appeal to Him. I shall instruct you at your leisure, and shall pray that God may impart to you this great gift of faith. After you are instructed, should you then decline to become a Catholic, I shall entertain for you only the fondest feelings of charity, and shall ever pray for you. You are now perplexed with doubt, but with God's help, divine faith will banish these doubts, and in their place the peace of God will reign." You do not respect the Bible, I interrupted. To this she answered : " I have ever guarded the Bible as a sacred trust, and carefully observed that every Catholic regarded it as the inspired revelations of God to man. It is useless for us to enter into a discussion upon this topic. All I ask of you is to study carefully and unbiasedly my history and the present religious agitations, and decide for yourself." " But I understand you are opposed to investigations and speculations of every kind."—" My child," she answered, kindly, " one truth cannot contradict another truth. The God of the Sacred Scriptures is the God of the physical universe. There can be no contradiction between His verbal revelation and the revelation of His greatness in the material world. The God of one is the God of the other, and there can be no discrepancy in His works. A Catholic is at liberty to

investigate every phenomenon of Nature and speculate upon their causes and study their effects. He is not free, however, to deny or abuse the truth ; but when you come for instruction, we can have more of this." I was still solicitous to hear her farther, and asked: " Do you claim to be infallible?"—" Yes," was her prompt response, " it could not be otherwise. God has designed it thus. Read my commission : *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" (Math. xxviii.—19.) "*He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned.*" (Mark xvi.—16.) Again : "*But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things.*" "*And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*" (Math. xxviii.—20.) I was astonished at this array of evidence, but she assured me that this was only a part of her commission. I said then, since you are infallible, it follows that you are an unerring guide? This was her answer : " For nineteen hundred years I have led the human race ; I still do lead it, and will ever lead it ; for I am commissioned by my Divine Master to conduct mankind to Him. I have watched over the cradle of my people. I have regenerated them in baptism. I have strengthened them ; yea, and at the bedside of the dying I have stood, fortifying them with the sacraments entrusted to me by my Lord and Master. At the threshold of death I have consigned them to the loving care of their Creator and mine. For nineteen hundred years I have taught the same doctrine and obeyed the same commission. Political, civil, and religious storms have beat upon me ; but I have not changed the truths deposited with me ; and I have outlived the storms, and from every

assault I have come forth stronger and more influential. Yes, unerringly I conduct my people from the cradle to their God. It could not be otherwise. My instructions are from Jesus, and my commission is signed by Him."

Now, my Christian friends, were I in search of religion, which do you think I should take? Which would you take? Do you not think we would be very imprudent were we not to select the old Church? For my part, examining religion seriously, yet fairly and without prejudice, I could not accept any but the Catholic Church. But you will say to me: "That is all very well; but the Catholic Church is subtle in her deliberations, crafty in her management, and false in her teachings." Pardon me, but be not so hasty. Note the words of our Divine Lord: "*He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned.*" He that believeth,—he that believeth what? The false, the deceitful, the misleading? No; the truth! But we are told that the Catholic Church teaches the false, that she is crafty and deceptive! But mark: "*He that believeth not, shall be condemned.*" Observe the condemnation. Jesus commands the Catholic Church to teach, and He declares: "*He that believeth not, shall be condemned.*" If he does not believe what? The doctrines of the Catholic Church! Jesus demands, therefore, that everyone shall believe the doctrines taught by the Catholic Church. Under what penalty? The penalty on condemnation. But can Jesus make this demand on persons to believe the false? By no means. Therefore the Catholic Church teaches the truth. It is to no purpose to say that there are other churches: for during fifteen centuries there was no other Church,

and during all this time, too, the command of Jesus to the Church to teach, and for all to believe, was binding. It is unnecessary to repeat or multiply proofs. The truth is evident, that, if Jesus is God, the Catholic Church is the only ark of salvation, and all are obliged to obey her in things spiritual.

In the presence of these facts, it is folly to say one church is as good as another. This assertion maintains that God is inconsistent and contradictory; that He acts without a definite system; that He has no order in the management of His affairs: for the various religious denominations are multiplying in variety, and are at variance with one another in doctrine. One denies what another holds to be true. Is there divine economy in this turbulent state of feverish and contradictory religious opinion? A careful person would not tolerate in his temporal affairs, so much contention. Are we to presume that God approves what human reason rejects?

Should not every Protestant, in justice to himself and in obedience to God, give this matter his impartial consideration? Is it not a question which requires calm, unbiased reflection? Will it injure our Protestant friends to examine an affair of so far-reaching importance? To ponder it over in their minds, will be an acknowledgment to God that they are willing to do His holy will, and follow whithersoever the Good Shepherd leads. May God grant us ever the grace of faith, and may every non-Catholic kindly and impartially weigh the history and the doctrines of the Catholic Church!

TRINITY SUNDAY.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
(St. Math. xxviii.—19.)

My Dear Friends: This text naturally leads us to consider the stupendous mystery of the Holy Trinity. Though we cannot solve the mysteries of our holy religion, it may be profitable to dwell upon them from time to time. You should not be disturbed in mind, because you cannot grasp these hidden things of God. Nor should you think your religion difficult because you cannot find an easy solution for the secrets of heaven. If you ponder a moment upon inanimate nature, you will find that there are mysteries in the natural order as well as in the supernatural. On all sides you will find yourself baffled. Physical sciences contain an analysis and history of many natural phenomena; but there is a voice in Nature which says: "So far you may come, and no farther." By means of scientific research, Nature has been extensively explored and wonderful discoveries made; still, what is known compared with what is not known, is as a drop of water to the ocean. Besides, there are secrets in physical nature which will ever remain so. For example, you may know something about the effects of electricity

and gravitation, but who has seen these forces, or who can analyze their substance?

In regard to the Blessed Trinity, it will be my purpose not to confuse you, but to be as clear as possible. It may be well to say here that many people have denied the existence of the Three Divine Persons in one essence. The Jews did not believe in the Trinity, nor do they at the present day, as you are aware. The Arians, in the fourth century, refused to believe in the divinity of the Second Person, our Divine Lord. The Mohammedans reject the Second Person, and are therefore not Christians. The same can be said of the Unitarians. Many philosophers of modern times have spurned the notion that three divine persons can co-eternally exist in one God. All these have depended upon the comprehensions of their own reason—measuring the infinite wisdom of God by their finite intellects ; striving to place Him under their microscopes ; endeavoring to analyze what their poor feeble powers cannot grasp. No wonder they failed. They were like a child with its tip-toes on the earth, trying to touch the stars with its hand. In their forgetfulness, and probably their pride, they attempted to assail heaven and penetrate the secrets of the Most High. They would have their dictum to be the law of heaven and the explanations of that law. What they cannot understand is false, and what is beyond their ken, has no existence. Forcibly has Alexander Pope addressed this class of men in the following lines:

“ O sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise
By mountains piled on mountains to the skies?
Heaven still with laughter, the ruin toil surveys,
And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.”

You may think that it is very disagreeable, that man's

knowledge is so circumscribed. Why did not God create us with a *knowledge* of all these things. In the first place, God could not endow us with faculties to know all things: for then He would, in the supposition, have us equal to Himself. This is impossible. You know there can be only one Infinite Being. So you understand that although you may be blessed with eternal happiness with God, there will ever be things beyond your comprehension. Again, for us on earth, I can see a great blessing in our ignorance. Did we know everything, then we would have nothing to learn. We would be indolent in realms of knowledge. We would not study, because there would not be anything to learn. What would have become of the vast army of men who in every age devoted their time in delving into the secrets of Nature and soaring to the throne of God. They drew their intense happiness from their intellectual pursuits, and their discoveries were their reward. Age after age has honored them. Their names are written indelibly upon the monuments of progress and discovery, while their memories stimulate others to earnest, honest effort. Moreover, rob man of labor, and you deprive him of heavenly merit. The scientist who patiently applies himself to research and offers his toil to God, will receive a recompense for his labors in the kingdom of Infinite Wisdom. Without going farther in this line of thought, let us agree with the poet :

“ Then say not man is imperfect, heaven is in fault ;
Say rather man is as perfect as he ought ;
His knowledge measured to his state and place,
His time a moment, and a point his space.”

My Christian friends, there is no difficulty in proving from the Sacred Scriptures the existence of the Most

Holy Trinity, while the Church in every age has taught this doctrine. In the Old Testament in the Book of Gen., i.—26, we read of God contemplating the creation of man. He says, as if taking council with the other Persons of the Trinity. "*Let us make man to our own image and likeness.*" Here you will notice more than one person is meant. For the word *us* is in the plural number. You will note, too, that the word *image* is in the singular number, which denotes not a plurality of gods, as the image is common to all. Again in Gen. xi., we learn that after the Deluge the Israelites wished to build a tower which would reach to heaven. In verse 7 of this chapter, the Lord says: "*Come ye, therefore, let us go down, and there confound their tongue, that they may not understand one another's speech.*" You easily perceive that here also more than one person is embraced in the words *ye* and *us*. That more than two persons can be understood of this expression, is clear from the Latin word *venite*. The Latin expression is: *Venite, decedamus et confundamus linguam eorum*. Were only one other person addressed, the Latin word would be *veni*, not *venite*.

Without dwelling longer on the passages from the Old Testament, from which evidence of the Blessed Trinity may at least be deduced, let us cull a few from the New Testament. In the Gospel according to St. John, xiv.—16, we have, upon the veracity of the Son of God, the declaration of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. "*I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever.*" Here the Son, the Second Person, speaks of the Father and the Holy Ghost. According to the same inspired writer, xv.—26, Christ is represented, saying: "*But when the Paraclete shall come, whom*

I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me." The text which I quoted as the subject of these remarks proves the same thing. "*Go forth and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" In this text we have evidence of the equality of the Persons of the Trinity. It does not say to baptize in the name of one of the Persons, but in the name of the Three Persons. And those who believe and are baptized, shall be saved. Their sins shall be forgiven them. But it requires the power of God to release a soul from the bondage of sin, and, moreover, it would be wrong to ascribe this power to anyone except God. But the Son of God, in His instructions to the Apostles, commands baptism to be administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He therefore declares each one to be equal to the other. Observe, the text does not say in the names of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, but in the name : thus expressing the Trinity of persons and the oneness of the essence. St. Johns I, Ep. v.—7., is lucid in these words : "*There are Three that give testimony in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One.*"

Now let us reflect briefly on what light reason may give us in the elucidation of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. You have all doubtlessly heard how St. Patrick taught the ancient inhabitants of Ireland the mystery of the Trinity. He took a shamrock, showed them how each leaf was equal to the other, all constituting one and co-existing in the same substance. Some have made use of an equilateral triangle to explain the same mystery. According to the definition

of such a figure, the angles and sides are equal to each other, but all form only one triangle and constitute only one essence. These examples enlighten us somewhat ; but the illustration which best elucidates, is found in the sun, the centre of our solar system. In the sun we find three forces : light, heat, and gravitation, existing mysteriously in one substance. God is infinite. The sun approaches the infinite, because its influence is felt in the most remote parts of the universe. God is omnipotent ; so is the sun with regard to all material substances ; for there is not an atom of matter in all creation which is not effected by its power. In God there are three distinct persons : the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In the sun we have three distinct forces : light, heat, and gravitation ; but existing in a wonderful manner in one substance. Deny the existence of one person of the Blessed Trinity, and you deny the Blessed Trinity. Destroy one of these solar forces, and you destroy the sun. God is eternal. Who can measure the age and destiny of the sun.

In speaking of the Blessed Trinity, we say God the Father created man, God the Son redeemed him, and God the Holy Ghost enlightens and sanctifies him. In regard to physical nature, we find a corresponding power in the sun. The heat of the sun, if it does not create, produces life, according to the hypothesis that all animate nature has sprung from the protoplasm. It follows that all life was generated by the heat of the sun. But though you may not accept this theory, you cannot well deny that millions of insects owe their life to this beneficent influence. Again, God the Son redeemed mankind. In a manner peculiar to itself, the light of the sun redeems all Nature on the

face of the earth. For without the light of the sun every living thing would die. It is constantly bringing it forth from what it was, and sustaining it in what it is. For without the light of the sun, no vegetation could live ; and if no vegetation, no animal life ; and no animal life, no man. The Holy Ghost enlightens and sanctifies ; that is, He illumines the intellect, directs its powers, sustains an order or system in the soul pleasing to Himself. Gravitation in the universe regulates the motions of the heavenly bodies, sustains them in their harmony, and directs all according to fixed laws. It need not be added that we are powerfully under its influence. Now, as the Three Persons of God are each the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and one could not effect anything without the others, so, too, you cannot separate the influence of these three forces one from another, in the effects mentioned.

Again, as God and the Blessed Trinity are mysteries incomprehensible to the human intellect, so are these forces. Each one is a natural mystery in itself, and also a mystery in their common existence in one substance. For while you may know something about the laws of light, heat, and gravitation, formulated by scientists, you know absolutely nothing of the substance of these forces. You may say that gravitation attracts in proportion to the density of objects, and inversely, in proportion to the square of the distance. Also, that light is a mode of molecular motion, etc.; but of the forces themselves, you are ignorant.

Now, who has given to the sun these forces ? Who has created this sphere, endowing it with such wonderful attributes ? God, you answer. You are correct, I add. But as God can endow a material substance with such powers and such inscrutable secrets, can He not

exist in a more mysterious manner Himself. Is not the eternal, all-wise Architect of the universe greater than His works ? Is not the designer always grander than the designed ? If we are puzzled by the mysteries of the things created by Him, can we expect to fathom the depths of His own nature and being. As we believe in the existence of gravitation from its effects, though we do not see it, let us look out upon the universe and believe in the Blessed Trinity, the God and the Creator of not only the visible universe, but also of the invisible.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

And they began all at once to make excuse. (Luke xiv.—18.)

My Dear Friends : Your attention is called this morning to a great man who made a feast and invited many to join him at the banquet. When his resources are amply employed, when all things are prepared, he sends forth his servants to announce to those who had been invited that all things were ready—that they should come and partake of his generosity. He extends them a hearty welcome ; but lo! they refuse. They are engaged in other pursuits. They have no time to show their appreciation for his kindness ; they ignore his friendship and begin to make excuses. But the master of the house is not to be trifled with. His feast must be attended. His banquet must not be in vain. So he sends out his servants into the by-ways, the streets, and the thoroughfares, that his house may be filled.

It is needless to tell you that this distinguished person is none else than Jesus Himself, and the feast of which he speaks, the Holy Eucharist. He invites all to participate in this adorable banquet. He gives Himself for their nourishment. He exhausts His goodness; for what more can He do than give Himself to be the sustenance of mortals. But these make excuses. They do not desire His stupendous favors. They prefer the things of this world. Pleasures and amusements, sin

and evil associates, engross their attention and occupy their time. Catholics admit His generosity, they admire His charity ; they praise His love for the human race,—but when they are invited to partake of this extraordinary feast, some have no time ; or, rather, they are imbued with passion, steeped in sin, enveloped in business. Time for everything. Time for indulgence in pleasure, time for excesses in eating and drinking, time for their own destruction, time even into late in the night or early in the morning to insult God ; but no time to acknowledge God's invitation, no time to be present at that banquet at which angels adore.

This delinquency on the part of Catholics is the source of many of their disorders. How can they be practical Catholics ? How can they be honest—honest to themselves, honest to their family, honest to their neighbors, and honest to their God, when they do not nourish their souls with the divine food administered at the banquet of the Saviour of mankind ? Such are not honest. There are many proofs of their dishonesty to be found in the experience of everyday life.

A father comes to me ; he says : “ I cannot do anything with my son. He was once a good boy, worked hard, assisted me in providing for the family. Now he runs with a bad gang. He is out late at night. He drinks, is quarrelsome, and I fear he may meet with an untimely end.” I ask this broken-hearted father : “ When did your ill-directed boy receive Holy Communion last ? ” “ Oh, he has not made his Easter duty in three or four years,” is the sad reply. This accounts for his change of conduct. This is proof of the efficacy of the most holy sacrament of the altar. When he approached this sacred feast at reasonable intervals, he was good, and

his father was happy. Now he refuses the invitation ; consequently he is a scamp, and his father is wretched.

A distracted mother complains : " My daughter is going to the bad. She keeps company with the most vile characters. Since she went from under my roof, no good has come of her. She is pert, disobedient, and giddy. Infamous rumors are afloat about her, and no wonder ; for her associates are numbered among the licentious and wicked. I am afraid she will meet a bad end, that she will bring ruin upon herself and disgrace upon us all." Ask the mother whether her wayward daughter frequents the sacraments, and her answer will be : " Ah, the sacraments ! She does not think of them. She does not go to Church. I have begged of her to go to Communion, but she only laughed at me. For my entreaties, I got sneers ; for my prayers, I got contempt. She is beyond the influence of prayer ; she cares not for my tears ; she despises God. She is mad ! She has no shame, no respect, no decency ! "

Ah ! what a change since she received first Holy Communion. She was an angel then, pure and happy in the simplicity of her childhood. She loved her parents, and they idolized her. Her heart aspired to the good. Every emotion was angelic. What misfortune has blighted her life ? Why did she barter a life of innocence and peace for one of sin and misery ? Slowly her affections were turned from the tabernacle in which her Saviour lived. Gradually she forgot Him Who is the preserver of innocence and the sustenance of the soul. From the moment she severed her attachment to the Blessed Eucharist, her course was downward and her heart corrupt.

A husband chides his wife. She is continually in her neighbor's house, instead of attending to her own busi-

ness. Her children have no care. They are running wild. In dirty and bad company, they spend their time. Home is neglected. Bad example is given by the very one who should be the guardian of the family. Sometimes she may drink. The house is ever in confusion. No order, no cleanliness, no propriety. What is the cause? You need hardly be told. This woman does not go to church on Sunday. She does not receive Holy Communion regularly. She has much to say unfavorably of those who go to Mass. Her tongue never ceases to deride others. It is like a gattling gun. She minds everyone's business but her own. What will become of her family? Will they be instructed? Will the children be pious and devoted recipients of the Blessed Sacrament? Will the child be better than the mother? But why is she thus? The same answer must be given. She has no love for Our Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar; perhaps she never did have. Her husband and her family are indeed to be pitied.

Somebody's wife calls upon me. She is distressed and forlorn—a picture of misery—haggard, thin, and poorly clad. I need not ask her what is wrong! Her very presence convinces me that she has a drunken husband. "My heart is broken from him," she sobs. "He was once a good man. When we were first married, he was sober, worked hard, and saved some money. After a time sickness came, and death, too. He became discouraged, blamed me for what I was not guilty of, or could not help. He took to drinking. He would stay out late at night playing cards. Often he would lose. Then he would drink and come home, break the furniture and dishes, scold and quarrel with us. Often have I begged of him to remain at home, to be the good husband and father that he once was. Sometimes he tries; but

they come and ask him out, and then he is as bad as ever. If you could only get him to go to church. If he would take the pledge, I know he would be good again." Yea, my dear friends, there is something more needed. To take the pledge is good, but to keep it is better. How can this unfortunate man gain what he has lost? How can he again avoid temptations, and bring joy to his own heart and that of his family? By receiving Holy Communion worthily. The man or the woman, the son or daughter, who worthily partakes of the feast which Jesus prepares for him or her, cannot be bad. The moment you see any person becoming careless in this manner, that moment beware of him or her. No one is to be trusted who does not with a contrite, Christian soul strengthen himself against temptation by receiving frequently Holy Communion. This is the nourishment of the Catholic soul. This is a proof of his honesty and his sincerity, of his fidelity and his industry. A Catholic who does not accept the generous invitation of our Divine Lord to participate at His feast, is a Catholic in whom I have no confidence; is a Catholic whom I would not trust; is a Catholic in whom there is something wrong: for he cannot turn his back on his God; he cannot violate those precepts which must necessarily fashion his conduct; he cannot break away from a safe mooring,—without endanger himself and others, and proving that he is a bad Catholic and a perverted man.

Listen, then, to the voice of God's servant asking you to His banquet. Do not make excuses. Do not say, the next week or the next month, lest Jesus may say to you, that you will never again taste of His feast.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Now the Publicans and sinners drew near unto Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, saying : This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. (Luke xv.—1, 2.)

My Dear Friends : In the words just read to you from the Sacred Scriptures, you might have noted an example of the kind condescension of our Divine Lord. *The Publicans and sinners drew near to hear Him.* He does not order them away, He does not look upon them with the eye of scorn, but permits them to come near Him. The Son of God speaks with sinners. He tells them that He loves them. His sacred words find ready entrance to their hearts. They are awakened by His tender remarks. The wickedness of sin is depicted in a sad but kindly manner. Its consequences are deplored in eloquent pathos. Repentance is encouraged ; nay, more, heaven rejoices at the conversion of a single sinner.

But the Pharisees and the Scribes murmur. There are always some fault-finders. They would have the bystanders consider them shocked at the conduct of our Saviour. He pretends to teach the way to heaven, but behold ! He converses with sinners and eats with them. His actions contradict His teachings. He must be just, as they are. Birds of the same feather flock

together, and they wink significantly. The poet's (Pope's) lines are quite applicable to them :

“ All seem infected that the infected spy,
As all look yellow to the jaundiced eye.”

All sinners may be divided into two great classes : the repentant and the unrepentant. These classes have their types at the Crucifixion. The repentant thief implores his God for mercy. “ Remember me when You come to Your kingdom.” The other blasphemes, is insulting, is impervious to the grace of God, and dies as he lived. As in the days when Our Lord taught the Publicans and sinners ; so to-day there still exists the repentant and the unrepentant sinner. The latter boasts of his crimes. These are his laurels. He delights to recount the things which destroyed the true imaged of God in his soul. Vile company, vile resorts, furnish the debasing joy of his degraded heart. His intellect is impoverished, his heart plundered, his health destroyed. Friends are praying for him. They search him out. They plead with him. They urge every argument likely to withdraw him from the paths of sin ; they offer every incentive likely to arouse a noble ambition. Even a departed mother or father is invoking the throne of God in his behalf. The most affectionate appeals are made, and God permits these to reach the sinner's heart through the channels of His mercy and His grace. But the hardened heart refuses to yield. It would be cowardice to withdraw. It would be weakness to leave those haunts of sin and those companions of crime. No; his ambition is destruction—the destruction of himself, the destruction of others, the destruction of the time-honored respect of his family. Father, mother, sister, and brother may weep and pray, but he heeds them not. They may bow their heads in shame ;

but emboldened by his excesses, he carries his head erect, defying for a time, God, man, and the devil. The day will come, however, when he must die—and die as he had lived.

The repentant sinner, on the other hand, yields to the inspirations of divine grace. Our Saviour touches the flinty heart, and the waters of repentance burst forth. In the silence of his breaking heart, in the depths of his bitter remorse, he pleads for mercy : “ Father of heaven, have pity on me ! I crave for pardon ! I have transgressed your laws, I have spurned your graces, but forgive me now. I was weak and passion was strong. I fell, alas, I fell ! Sacred Heart, pardon me ! ” Our Divine Lord lifts him up kindly, breathes words of encouragement into his soul, presses him to His Sacred Heart ; tells him : “ Never mind the past, My child. My heart bleeds affectionately for you. Never again will I remember your transgressions. They shall never be a reproach to you. They are forgotten forever. Henceforth we shall be friends.” The sinner rejoices in the peace which he finds. His heart expands under the influence of divine grace. He thought sin lay through walks bedecked with flowers. He was disappointed. He only found thorns.

Some Catholics are standing by. They observe that Jesus is speaking with the sinner ; that the latter has changed his manner of living ; and instead of rejoicing at the poor sinner’s conversion, they make unfavorable comment. They criticise his past life. They speak unkindly of him, and take pains that he may learn their unjust criticisms. They seem to think that no one has a right to go to church but themselves, that none are good but themselves. By their actions they would impress you with the notion that they believe the poor,

heart-broken sinner should be allowed no place but hell. They are astonished at the presumption of our Divine Lord. He should not hold converse with a sinner, nor eat with him. Why, the example is disedifying, is scandalous. How can Catholics boast of their faith, when its Founder, Jesus Christ, ventures to talk with sinners. He makes little of Himself, and us, too.

The contrite soul feels these piercing shafts aimed and poisoned by those from whom he should receive hope and encouragement. Our Saviour takes him aside from the carping crowd, from the pharisaical Catholics. He says to him : " Pay no attention to those wicked tongues. Be not discouraged. The angels of My Eternal Kingdom rejoice at the sincerity of your heart. I am your friend. I shall not only speak with you and eat with you, but I shall feed you with My own body and blood. I shall live in you. Your nourishment shall be the food of angels. Peace shall reign between you and Me. I shall place a covenant with you. Of old, I placed the rainbow in the heavens as a testimony of My covenant with the ancients, that I would never destroy the world again by water ; so now I place a covenant with you. As a sign of My friendship, behold Me in the tabernacle on the altar. I am there for you. When you are weak, come to Me. When uncharitable persons treat you unkindly, come, and tell Me your sorrows. When you are oppressed by cares and woes, I shall comfort you, and in the last moments of your earthly pilgrimage, I shall come to you. I shall raise you up, and you shall be eternally happy with Me."

My dear friends, learn a lesson from your Saviour and your God. Speak with sinners, not to become perverted, not to learn wickedness from them ; but to withdraw them from the avenues of sin, to assure them that

God is good, and is willing to receive them once more into His friendship. Fathers and mothers, see to it that you talk with your children about the affairs of their salvation. Teach them by your example, that they may not abandon the ways of virtue. See that they are nourished by the sacraments which Jesus instituted for their peace and nourishment here, and as a ladder by which they can attain to an eternal reward with Him Who taught sinners. Let every pious Catholic exert his or her influence in bringing sinners to repentance. Encourage them, assist them, exhort them to avoid the bad and seek the good. Not by boasting of your own merits, not by extolling yourselves, while you depreciate others ; but kindly, gently lead them to the feet of Jesus, your Saviour and theirs. You shall thus be a blessing to society ; you shall thus be true children of the Church established by Christ for the conversion of sinners. And He will reward you for your Christian efforts. You shall lead many thereby to righteousness : "And those who lead many to justice shall shine like the stars for all eternity."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Master, we have labored all night, and have taken nothing.
(St. Luke v.—5.)

My Dear Friends: You have here an example of men toiling all night without compensation. Luck, as some would say, was against them. They went to their boat in the evening with the hope of success. They probably calculated upon a rich reward, and planned what they would do with the money obtained from the sale of their fish. They labored all night; their plans were frustrated by failure; but they learned that something else besides toil is necessary to profitable success. They learned that God's blessing is very useful even in the ordinary affairs of life. At the word of their Divine Master, they renewed their efforts, with prosperous results. Jesus was with them, and they toiled not in vain.

Since that memorable morning, how many have been disappointed in their plans! How many a heart has ached over failure! How many a brain burned with the fever of opposition! How many a disastrous cloud has lashed to ruin the glowing aspirations of youth! How many a hoary head has gone down into the grave, weary of toil, but unrequited by prosperity! Opposition, failure, gloom, and despondency are the wedded partners

of many a soul. The reason ? To ascertain that would require the ability to sound the profoundest depths of human existence. Yet, there are explanations for many of the disasters of life ; and the chief one, the one which covers the greatest number of life's ills, is apparent in to-day's Gospel,—Jesus was not with them.

Still, you should remember that all the ills of life are not disadvantageous. Sometimes you are tumbled down only to make you stronger to climb ; or by repeated tumbles, to teach you that you are trying to climb the wrong ladder. If you are under the protection of heaven, the obstacles which block your way are tablets of instruction, and it would be well for you to stop to read and study them. Youth and even old age are not seldom on the wrong way. Especially is this true of youth. Led on by the scintillating prosperity of others, they think only of the dizzy heights to which others have attained. They weigh not their own capabilities, nor the sacrifices to be made, nor the road to be travelled with tortured brain and trouble heart, nor the ruins of ambition, health, chastity, and faith to be found everywhere along this road. They only look to the end of the journey, but never consider the cost required for reaching that destination, if indeed it were possible to make the journey. How many a Catholic youth has been shipwrecked in making this voyage ! They are spurred on by an unlaudable ambition ; they begin by discarding sound principles of conduct, indispensable ballast in the tempest of life. They next cast overboard their faith, the compass which would indicate their safe course, and which, in storm and doubt, would still remain true to them. They imagine they must pander to the whims and prejudices of other doctrines, and they soon become adept in their cringing, grovell-

ing, contemptible sycophancy. If they succeed, they have bartered, for the acquisition of a bauble, every attribute of true manhood or womanhood, and in their so-called success, they find little to compensate them for their sleepless nights and painful days. If they fail—and this class usually fails—they have nothing but health impoverished, honor squandered, friendship auctioned to the highest bidder, their religion sold in the market place of scoff and hatred. Whether this class succeed or fail, they accomplish nothing—nothing when the end of life comes and the grave is opening to receive them, for Jesus was not with them. *They had labored all night and had taken nothing.*

To those who adhere to their faith, as the vine to the sturdy oak, I would say : read the characters engraven upon the obstacles in your way. God may intend you for another purpose. Your course is higher than the plane in which you move. He is speaking to you by means of these obstacles. Such strive to learn the will of God, and with this they are determined to comply. If they ascend to the highest peaks of achievement and fame, they attribute their success to the Author of all good gifts. If adversity block his path, he turns with unfaltering faith to supplicate the throne of heaven for assistance. In every affair of life, good or evil, his reliance upon heaven is just the same. He toils with as much industry and effort as others, still he is always thanking God for His blessings and praying Him to be his friend in the time of need. In this manner, whether he succeed or fail, he is still laying up treasures in heaven. For him earth is only a transitory abode : at best a place of trial and suffering ; but beyond the grave his heart is fixed upon the celestial home created for him by a benign Father.

Is he poor? Then he offers to God the sweat of his honest brow—a noble offering. Is he rich? Then by assisting the needy, he offers to God a portion of his wealth—a pleasing gift. Is he a scientist? Then he dedicates to his God the fruits of his intellectual labors. So you perceive how easy it is to render your actions fruitful to you here on earth and meritorious for heaven. Each day grants you, as it were, a coupon which increases your claims on heaven.

Do not be idlers. Faithful labor bestows a continuous reward—contentment on earth and joy in eternity. Do not say with the laborers mentioned by the inspired writer: "*No one has hired us*"; but be up and willing to engage in any honest occupation. All earnest, useful labor is good. "Honor and shame from no condition rise; act well your part; there all the honor lies." Study yourselves first; try to find out to what you are best adapted. Having discovered this, plod faithfully and incessantly onward. With the smile of heaven upon you, success must ultimately perch upon your banner. Be not discouraged by opposition. This usually makes the heart stronger, trains the will, disciplines the intellect, equips a man or woman for greater usefulness and more brilliant enterprises. Many a rich man was a poor boy; and many a notable scholar displayed no great talent in early life. What was the secret of their success? My answer is, perseverance! Perseverance in the right direction led them on to the goal of their ambition! They left behind them "footprints on the sands of time," which tell us the only royal road to pre-eminence is unremitting, judicious toil. The one who has a willingness to participate in the world's great labor, possesses already stock which will declare a generous dividend, if only rightly employed.

How will you employ it ? By observing the laws of God and man. Do nothing that will bring dishonor upon yourself or others. Respect your word as you would your bond. Be a dutiful child of your holy Mother the Church. Never allow adversity to rob you of the courage of your soul, nor permit prosperity to make a fool out of you. Never forget the friends who stood by you in the trying hour of need. They were the dews that gave vigor to your parching hopes, and harvests to your famishing ambition. Forget them not. To do so bespeaks a little mind, a miser's soul, a niggardly heart. Let not the flattery of opulence, nor the glory of achievements, nor the grandeur of your acquirements, absolve you of your allegiance to your creed. The avenues of prosperity are dangerous places ! Beware of them ! Desert your God, and all your greatness is nothing ! You have bartered heaven for temporal advantages ! You are a sycophant, a craven, to sell your God for transitory treasures ; and your fatal mistake will stare you in the face at the last moments of your ill-spent life, if not before that awful hour !

“ *Without Me you can do nothing,*” says Almighty God. Nothing meritorious for salvation. Then in all your efforts, have the approbation of heaven. In prosperity you will then manifest wisdom ; in adversity you will not be overwhelmed by any disaster. When friends are false, you have a Friend in heaven. In all the fickleness of life, you are constant in your fidelity to Almighty God. In your ill fortune He will not desert you. Offer the first fruits of your labor to Him. Place your undertakings under His protection. In the morning, offer your toil to Him. At evening, thank Him for His assistance ; then when the end of life comes, you will not say : “ *Master, we have labored but have taken nothing.*”

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

For I say to you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. v.—20.)

My Dear Friends : It is not my purpose this morning to describe the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees, nor comment upon their injustice. The earth is agitated by injustice—the injustice of the employer on the one hand and the employed on the other. The injustice perpetrated in our courts, where justice should reign, The poor are punished excessively, the opulent are often unjustly exonerated. Injustice stalks boldly through the land, and is often approved, while justice is despised. But we do not wish to dwell upon this lamentable state of affairs. There is another subject suggested by our text, to which we desire to direct your attention, and which is even more important to you. It is the lack of justice wanting in parents toward their children. In considering this defect, we shall confine our remarks to this parish. The care of your children is largely entrusted to me; I shall therefore restrict my remarks to you, that you may know how your conduct and that of your children appear to me ; and having thus viewed yourselves in the mirror of my words, you may in the future co-operate more effect-

ually with me in the promotion of your children's temporal and spiritual advancement.

There are some parents belonging to this parish who concern themselves very little about their children. Instead of teaching good, they inculcate, by their example, evil into the souls of their little ones. They are the worst enemies of their children. Though I have exhorted you time and again ; though I have besought you to send your children to instruction ; by some fatal obstinacy you persist in having them run the streets and associate with those who are vicious. What do your children learn on the streets ? Good manners ? No ; you are bound to answer. No good manners are acquired from their associates. You must know this. You must know that they learn to swear, to use obscene language, to steal, and everything else that is pernicious. But what do I say ? Is not the basest example given them at home. At home, where the young heart should be trained to sobriety, where the intellect should be molded to usefulness, where the soul should be directed to honorable aspirations,—there in the very home of the child, in the nursery of their youthful years, bad example is given. Instead of sobriety, drunkenness prevails ; instead of Christian virtue, vice abounds ; instead of prayer, profanity is heard. How can a child, amidst such environments, be good ? The marvel is that some children are as good as they are. I do not say that all the parents of this parish are bad ; but I do say that some are accountable for the misconduct of their children. Were some of our Catholic parents compared with the Scribes and Pharisees, it appears to me that their chances of salvation are more meagre than that of those to whom the words of our Saviour in this day's Gospel were so

forcibly addressed. Might we not say in truth that the justice of such parents toward their children is not as commendable as that of the Scribes and Pharisees? Might we not say to such parents, that unless your justice toward your children abound more in the future than at present, you shall never enter the kingdom of God? These words may sound harshly, but they are spoken in charity and with the conviction that they are true.

Our Divine Lord says: "*Therefore, if thou offerest thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and first go to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*" (Matt. v.—23, 24.) I would say to some parents, if you come to offer your gift at the altar and remember that your children are running the streets, leave here your gift and go in search of your children. Bring them to church. Offer them to God. Let them be your gift. God will be pleased with such an offering, for it will be the first step toward the complete dedication of them to their Creator. If it is a necessary condition to the worthy offering of a gift to God, that you become reconciled with your brother, how much more obligatory it is to teach your children the way to eternal glory. How can you be content in church? how can you pray? or can you flatter yourselves that your prayers will be favorably heard, when your children are coursing unrestrained about the town? Can you assume a sanctimonious air? can you convince yourselves that you are truly devout, when your children are untrained in virtue, uncouth in manners, impious in language—and all this due to your negligence?

Alas! this is not all. What about those parents who

seldom come to Mass? What about them and their children? Who can estimate their injustice? Who can measure the depths of their degradation? Ah, how the voice of their Saviour cries to them: "*Who scandalizes one of these little ones, it were better that a millstone be tied around his neck and he sunk in the bottom of the deep!*" These words should ever vibrate through the hearts of parents, should penetrate their soul and awaken an act of contrition for their cruel negligence toward themselves and their children. "*Who scandalizes one of these little ones!*" Who are they whose conduct invokes such condemnation? Are they demons from the abyss of the damned? Are they the outlaws of society? No; they are parents! They are called by the endearing name of father and mother; but they are ruining their children. These call for the bread of life, for instruction, edification, and good example; but those kind, affectionate, Christian parents give them poison—that poison which corrupts the heart, which contaminates the intellect, which destroys the moral and religious life! Woe to such parents! Can they expect eternal happiness when their children are condemned to eternal miseries? Can they enjoy temporal life, when they know they are outcasts of society? when their children are in jail, the penitentiary, or in other places of disgrace and sin? If the children are condemned to walk the ways of wretchedness here and hereafter, on account of the heartless malice of the parents, there is little hope for such cruel parents. Truly their justice does not abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Parents are obliged to be interested in the pious and useful education of their children. God requires them to train their children in virtue and religion. Nay,

more : does it not seem strange that parents must be exhorted and even scolded before they will send their children to instruction and Mass ? One would think their highest aspiration would be the training of their children, the leading of them into the avenues of honor, self-respect, and self-control ; that they would infuse into their young souls a love of God, a love for religion, a love for everything exalting. Some parents, however, take a diametrically opposite view. Judging from their actions, I would come to the conclusion that they desire their children to wallow in the lowest filth of society, never to attain to anything worthy, self-supporting ; or sacred. Our Lord says to such parents : “ *Let those little ones come unto Me ; for such is the kingdom of heaven.* ” And such parents say : “ No, they will not go to you ! We do not wish them to be converted by Your goodness nor sanctified by Your blessing.”

Our Saviour prays that they may come to Him. “ *Let them come to Me.* I shall teach them the way of eternal life. I shall lift them up. They will pursue virtue. They will be sanctified by My grace. I shall feed them with My own body and blood, send them to My Church. Send them to instruction, and they and you will rejoice.”—“ No ; ” their parents reply ; “ they want none of Your sacred caresses ! they want none of Your saving benedictions ! they want neither church nor instruction, nor happiness with You ! They shall run the streets, associate with infectious companions ! They shall blaspheme, steal, become drunken sots, and the acme of their record shall be made in prison or upon the scaffold ! ” Oh, wretched parents ! Can you condemn your children, the children of your heart, to such awful conditions ! Have you not some pity ? Will you not foresee the misery and the disgrace—awful bur-

dens—which your children must bear when you are in the grave, unless you train them thoroughly in the sacred truths of your religion? Have compassion upon them. Send them to catechism. Do everything in your power to give them a Christian education. Then, indeed, your justice will abound more than the Scribes and Pharisees, and your reward will be an endless joy with your children in the kingdom of your heavenly Father.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

I have compassion on the multitude : for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat. (St. Mark viii.—2.)

My Dear Friends : You have just heard, as you have often heard before, how Jesus fed the multitude. He had compassion on them. How kindly he expresses Himself ! With what solicitude He thinks of them ! If He leave them depart without nourishment, they will famish by the wayside. They have been with Him three days. What joy must have been theirs ! What a privileged opportunity ! Listening to His wonderful discourses, they forgot their physical wants. The soul was nourished by His words of wisdom. Unmindful of the future, they gave themselves unreservedly to Him. But they must now part, teaching us by this example that, while we serve God, we should not neglect the temporal affairs of life ; that we should carry in our souls His instructions, be guided by them, never allow them to become dormant in our hearts, though we may be interested in the affairs of earth. If we always remain faithful to Him, He will take care that we shall never famish.

You may be prone to ask the question : “ Did these whom He so affectionately fed in this miraculous man-

ner, always cling to these memories? In spirit did they ever depart from Him?" Were we to judge them according to the standard of the present age, according to the conduct of some Catholics, we would be compelled to admit that some of them at least soon forgot the lessons on eternal life, which they heard on that memorable occasion; or these lessons ere long became for them lifeless principles. I say, were you to estimate the holiness of their after actions by the criterion which some Catholics by their waywardness establish, I think you would be inclined to declare that many of them grew forgetful, and in time entirely neglected the sage maxims to which they had once listened. They had a Divine Instructor, it is true; but have not Catholics been taught by a teacher who has her doctrines and commission from this self-same Saviour? Those were fed in a miraculous way by bread which gave strength to the body. These—these very Catholics to whom reference is made, were nourished, body and soul, by the body, blood, soul, and divinity of that very Instructor. How many Catholics, instructed in childhood and youth in the healthful principles of Christian truth, have turned their backs upon the old Church, and by their actions defied their God!

Is it not lamentable to see Catholics reared in the bosom of the Church, forgetting all the solid truths of religion once cherished by them. As children, they were taught the rudiments of Catholic doctrine. With what zeal they prepared themselves for first Holy Communion! Angel they were when they for the first time partook of the bread of life,—that bread which came down from heaven to be their food and nourishment. What innocent aspirations filled their young hearts! What pious plans they laid for the future!

But they were not steadfast in their youthful resolves. The aspirations faded from their hearts. Probably their parents were indifferent in the observance of their religious duties ; and this deficiency on the part of the parents was destructive to the child. One thing is certain, that as soon as the child mingled with company, as soon as he began to estrange himself from the benefits conferred by the sacraments, his tendencies were downward. Like an exposed flower, he withers before the frosts of bad companionship. He fails, but his failure is largely due to his own indifference. While he said his prayers night and morning ; while he devoutly heard Mass on Sunday, and strengthened his soul with the exalting efficacy of the sacraments, he was good, he was virtuous. But many boys and girls, as they grow into youth, become ashamed of practising these virtues which sustain the vigor of the will and fertilize the Christian emotions of the heart. Led by folly, they imagine it would not do to be good ; or perhaps they fear criticism. Some carping tongues may censure their piety. Ah ! how happy they always would be, if the tongue of slander could say nothing worse than that they were good.

Youth brings its passions, which often cause many to mourn,—passions good in themselves, but which must be curbed. If not restrained, then they become a tempest sweeping to destruction. If trained to subjection, they elevate rather than demoralize the possessor. At this period of life all the safeguards available should be cast around the young ; and the best of these is a rational observance of these sacred truths which made them pure and happy on the morning of their First Communion. To these ought to be added reading of an elevating, moral, but attractive tone. Teach the child to read

wholesome literature when he is young, and he or she will not depart from the true God. They will in a measure, at least, be able to combat the evil teachings of godless writers, and may be the means of saving an erring soul. Much, indeed, can be done by a well-informed Catholic. He meets men in every walk of life. Sensible controversies sometimes arise ; and if he can give cogent answers to the doubting inquirer, he will accomplish much good. But his life must not be a contradiction to his arguments. His should radiate Catholic principles of morality and religion. Then will his words have weight and influence. Then will his daily conduct appeal to men of common sense and voice the efficacy of Catholic training.

Moreover, parents should incessantly train their children to habits of industry and honesty. Industry will keep them engaged in worthy pursuits, will keep them from bad companions, will make them both thrifty and sober ; while honesty will win them approval, will recommend them to places of honor and trust, will prevent them bringing disgrace upon themselves and their friends. "*An honest man is the noblest work of God*" ; but you cannot have the honest man unless you have the honest boy. "*The boy is the father of the man.*" Besides, were all Catholic young people honest how much it would help those seeking for positions. The fact that they were Catholics would be a recommendation sufficient for the employer. In this manner one could help another along the rugged way to profitable situations. But let one Catholic—only one—prove himself dishonest in deed or in word to his employer, and this person will lose confidence in Catholics, and will ever afterward regard them with suspicion. On the other hand, let him show himself reliable amidst every temptation, and he

must necessarily advance. It will, too, be a source of pleasure to him to know that his advancement will assist others to obtain employment.

Now all this and more, too, will be realized if Catholic youth wander not from the precepts learned in childhood; if they do not depart from the teachings of their Church and the commandments of Almighty God. Let them remain firm in the innocent resolutions made on First Communion day, when for the first time they were nourished in a most miraculous manner by the Saviour Who had compassion on the multitude. Let them renew those resolves at each succeeding communion, and add to them some new principle of conduct which more experienced years discern to be requisite to a successful career in noble, honest, faithful action. Let them never barter for any consideration the fidelity they owe their Eternal Father, and He will always have compassion on them. He will never permit them to faint by the way. In moments of discouragement, He will stimulate them to greater exertion; when depressed by disappointments, He will infuse new fortitude; when enemies will attack them, His irresistible right arm will be their armor, and the world will be the better for their living!

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. (St. Math. vii.—15.)

My Dear Friends : You may say upon first thought, we have no prophets ; that the age of prophecy is passed ; that there are no such persons in our time, either false or true. If you reflect ; if you consider your own experience—the observations you have made—you will conclude with me that false prophets still infest the earth ; that the words of our Divine Saviour which I have quoted, are applicable to our age. They still come to you in the clothing of sheep, but they are wolves in disguise. They have a bland smile, bewitching words, a fascinating demeanor. With their polished, oily tongues and gentle behavior they are at heart serpents. They ingratiate themselves into the favors of the unsuspecting and innocent. They are gentle only to deceive ; boisterous at times only to intimidate ; affable only to destroy. Exteriorly, the Gospel compares them to sheep ; but interiorly is where the malice resides. Beware of them ! Heed the warning of your Lord and your God ; He does not speak in vain. He knows the heart as well as the appearance of things. So obey His fatherly admonishings.

That you may the better understand what is meant, when I say there are false prophets, let us take a few examples to elucidate our subject. Here is a man; he meets one of you. He says: "Come, let us have a few drinks. Let us enjoy ourselves. We shall have a good time." But you answer: "I cannot go. I promised to be home at a certain hour; and if I don't, the old lady will be vexed." He replies with apparent boastfulness: "To hell with the old women! We cannot be always tied to their apron-strings. What do they mean? Make slaves of us? They have no use for us but to work. If I were to die, you would see how soon my old woman would have another man; and it is just the same with all the women. Come, let us have a good time for once in our lives. Let us eat, drink, and be merry; and let the old women have what is left." After some more seductive argument, seasoned with a judicious amount of flattery, you go with him to the saloon. This man may be out in the interest of the tavern proprietor. But be this as it may, you drink and become unconsciously happy. A few drinks do not satiate the appetite once awakened. You drink until the wee, small hours of the morning, and very likely foot all the expenses. A faint shadow of your wife and family flitter across your benumbed imagination. You think you will go home and rest up a little. You do not go far till you fall into the gutter. Covered with mud, you try to rise. But the more you labor to regain your feet, the more you are besmeared with the filth into which you have fallen. You conclude to remain where you are to sober a little. After a few hours, you wake up. You do not see your boon companion. He seems to have taken wings. But your head is in a frightful shape. It compares very favorable with your

clothes. You totter along home in a fit of despondency. What, let me ask, about that home? Children and wife have passed an anxious night, wondering what became of you. And there they are, and there you are, an abject sight, before them; the children dismayed and your wife disconsolate. What now do you think about your prophet? He promised you a good time. He assured you that your joy would be commensurate to the amount of intoxicants you would absorb. Did his prophecy come true? Was he not in reality a false prophet? Did he not deceive you? Did he not bring misery upon yourself and tears to the eyes of your wife and children? Beware, I say, of those false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep! Beware, before they devour you and all you have!

Here is another prophet. He insinuates himself among the young and pure of soul. By his suave countenance and nicety of speech he wins his way into their confidence. His alluring smile has all the charm, all the destructive power of a serpent's eye. They fall a victim to his snare. Indeed, so powerful is his influence over them, that at his beck they willingly plunge into the whirlpool of sinful pleasure. He found them innocent, he leaves them degraded. The brow that formerly was decked with modesty is besmirched with shame. They have fallen from the peace of angels to the depths of human disgrace. This demon has entered into the heaven of their young lives, where guilt had never marred, nor temptations had an abode. They were happy and simple. Innocence had thrown her mantle about them, and loving aspirations were entwined around their hearts. He gradually, stealthily enticed them from the bowers of tranquil

youth. It was only for a walk or a drive at first, but the friend was designing, was crafty. While his lips spoke gentle words, the fumes of hell blazed around his heart. His object was to destroy, and destroy he did ! At first they would return home in time at night. They had not broken all the silken cords of restrain ; but now they care not for the supplications of their parents ; they listen not to the admonitions of the Church ; they fear not the decrees of Almighty God. The friend promised them pleasure, but he gives them sorrow. They were to have unstinted joy ; but they quaff unceasingly from poisonous springs of disgrace, dishonor, and remorse. Was he not a false prophet ? or, if the schemer was a prophetess, the same is true : she was false—false as the inmates of hell ! Yea, were it possible, falser, meaner, more fiendish, more cruel than Lucifer himself ! For this prophet or prophetess is human, and he or she pollutes poor, weak human kind !

How many young people, boys and girls, are thus destroyed ? How many curses they heap upon their own poor heads and hearts by following the decoying villain who plots their ruin. Are Catholics exempt from this nefarious business ? Alas ! we regret to say that some Catholics wear the livery of hell. Their highest ambition is to blast innocence and blight happy lives ; to allure from peaceful homes and lead into dens of iniquity. Beware, then, of these false prophets ! They are in sheep's clothing—arrayed in fine words : so nice, so gentlemanly, such a sweet temper. Beware of them ! The wages they will give you is death. Yea, worse than death ; for dying, you will not die, but live a life of remorse, an example of your own folly and the prophet's treachery.

The false prophet appears in another rôle. He is a

gambler. His passion for gaming is intense. As he cannot gamble alone, he seeks companions, and one gambler is sufficient to corrupt a whole parish. He draws many foolish persons into the same habits as those which make his own life miserable. He will pretend he cannot play well, or he will seduce another to be his partner. You will win, he assures the other. You can make money easily and quickly in this manner. It is folly to work hard. Men make fortunes in a few hours. "Come," the gambler will urge, "you can win without difficulty. I shall play into your hand. I warrant you it is the easiest thing in the world. You have a sharp eye. Were I one-half as keen as you, I would be a rich man. Why you can see right through a person. I never saw a man who could read the countenance as correctly as you can." You yield to this polished flattery, with the result that you rise from the gaming table a poorer but perhaps a wiser man. Did you realize the wealth which the prophet guaranteed you? Oh, no; that was not his business. He was in it for gain. Someone had to lose.

Now while gambling is bad in itself, it has, moreover, a retinue of other evils. Drinking is one. Then quarrelling, and sometimes murder. Employment is neglected; regular hours at home are abandoned; money is stolen to meet the exigencies of the game. Then follow ruined fortunes and broken hearts. A youth addicted to games of chance will wreck a whole neighborhood of boys. These will steal from their parents, then swear they didn't; use the filthiest language; become rowdies; associate with the lowest strata of young men,—damning themselves while they distract and impoverish their parents. An awful crime against themselves and against law and order! What will be

their fate? What is the fate of a gambler? A wretched death and an unhallowed grave. Thousands he has ruined; thousands he has enticed from the noble walks of life. Homes he has plundered, sorrows he has multiplied, souls he has doomed to endless torture; what can he expect himself?

Gambling is a terrible passion. It takes possession of a person, never to relinquish its grip. It involves its votary into sin and grave vices. Drunkenness, theft, lust, and murder are often a part of its train. Visit the gambler's home. In the heyday of his prosperity it may be nicely furnished; but it is not happy. But when ill luck attends him, then his home becomes a madhouse, a residence for poverty, dissipation, and fierce resolution. Beware, therefore, of the false prophet who would tempt you to depart from honesty and sobriety, to follow him in his devious route. If you enlist yourself under his banner, you will leave behind tranquillity, good name, credit—everything which goes to make an honorable person.

You perceive we only touched principally upon the temporal losses sustained by following the false prophets. Moreover, there are others of whom self-respect forbids us to speak. By their fruit you shall know them, and their lives and the ends thereof will be distinguished for evil; for a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. A just God will demand of them an account of the lives they blighted. On earth, they will be noted for the disorders of their lives. Prison will often be their homes. Destruction they will ultimately bring upon themselves. Their shrewdness will not always answer for a mask to their iniquities. The autumn will come. The fruit they will have will be bad. They will be cut down when they least expect it, and an avenging God

will punish them for all the lives they wrecked.

Do not, therefore, Christian friends, be deceived. The honest, straightforward way is the best here, and surely is approved by the God of virtue. You do not desire a criminal's grave ; you do not wish to render your souls polluted with every crime, into the presence of an all-pure God ; you do not want the curses of injured youth, of betrayed innocence, of broken-hearted parents, to accompany you before the tribunal of unerring justice. Avoid, then, bad company. Be not entrapped by the graciousness of a cunning deceiver. Tempt not others into the meshes of sin, nor sink yourselves into the pits of infamy ; "*For the wages of sin is death ; but the grace of God, everlasting life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

What is this I hear of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for now thou canst not be steward. (Luke xiv.—2.)

My Dear Friends : These words should impress you deeply with the truth that those things which you call yours, do not in the strictest sense belong to you. All things are from God. He possesses all. You are only the stewards, and must at some time give an account of your stewardship. If you employ the things placed in your care by Almighty God in a praiseworthy manner, they will redound to your credit ; He will reward you for your just and charitable disposition of them. On the contrary, if you misuse them, if you think they are yours, and yours only ; if you use them to establish a selfish, pernicious reputation, they will be an injury to you when you come to answer for your stewardship.

Supposing an angel of death would now stand in your midst and summon anyone of you to render an account of your affairs, how would the books of your life appear. Would the credits be large and numerous and the debits be few and insignificant? Is there anyone of you prepared for the ordeal? You would recoil from such an invitation. You would want time to adjust

your affairs, to blot out some of the debits and increase your credits. But at this moment, would the balance sheet of your life's conduct be favorable or unfavorable? This is the awful question ; for, if it is not in a condition to bear inspection now, when will it be ? Remember that as a person lives, so he is likely to die ; and at any moment the Eternal Master may say to you : "*What is this I hear of you ? Render an account of your stewardship ; for now you cannot be steward.*" Render an account of the wealth you amassed ! Render an account of the life given you ! Render an account of the talents with which I endowed you and the opportunities afforded you ! Do you not think that were you now called to reply to the summons, you would be in as perplexing a condition as the steward mentioned in the Gospel ?

Let us reflect upon the suggestions which our text presents. Do you use your wealth for good purposes ? Have you acquired it in laudable pursuits ? To gain opulence is not to be condemned ; but have you gained it honestly, and do you employ it in a Christian manner ? Has it been obtained by the ruination of others ? Have you built the foundation upon spoils taken from the weak and the unfortunate ? There are some who care not by what means they attain to wealth, so long as they possess the glittering stores. It might have caused tears to be shed. It might have caused hearts to break ; but no matter, so long as they have succeeded in the affairs of life. They expect that with riches will come power, and influence, and a great name. What care they who may suffer ? Wealth is what they want, and wealth they will have, though the orphan's and the widow's cry appeal to heaven for revenge. They become arrogant and proud. They wish to be the dictators of other men's business ; and dictators they will be, though they im-

poverish and pillage the weaklings who fall within their iron grasp.

But when they least expect it, the Lord God will demand a settlement. He will say to them: "*What is this I hear of you? Render an account of your stewardship; for now you cannot be steward.*" Render an account of the tears you caused to be shed! Render an account of the hearts you have broken! Render an account of the poor you have plundered, of the lives you have wrecked, of the souls you have destroyed, of the sorrows you have multiplied! Render an account of these things, for you shall be a steward no longer.

Another having reached the summit of power and pre-eminence, flatters himself that he is the sole architect of other people's fortunes as well as the dictator of their behavior. What he desires, they must accomplish. His beck must be law to them, and woe to the one who dares be an independent man! He is punished, probably ruined. He is only a slave. Who need give him any honest consideration? The mighty thus rule it over thousands who are only a little better than abject slaves. And how is this mightiness purchased? Sometimes by stealth, by chicanery, by the temporal destruction of the poor or weak. He commands with the haughtiness of a despot, and executes with the unrelenting severity of a tyrant. Instead of using his acquisitions to relieve misery and wretchedness, instead of consoling the unprosperous, repairing disaster, calming troubled hearts, mitigating distress, he aggravates these. He takes advantage of disaster to increase his power. The misery and failure of others but accentuate his greatness. Their ill-luck will make him more prominent; will make more brilliant the autocrat of ruined fortunes.

But there is One above him—One Who patiently notes his conduct, and finally notifies him to appear, and asks him : “ What is this I hear of thee ? The cry of the wronged and the oppressed cry to Me for justice. Render an account of the failures you have caused, of the homes you have impoverished, of the persons you have made destitute, of the injustices you have perpetrated. The moans of the suffering demand justice. The promises you have made, only to break ; the distress of which you were the promoter, the punishments you have unjustly inflicted, the malice with which you have hounded the unfortunate, reach My ears and clamor for redress. Render an account of your inhumane behavior, for now thou canst not be My steward.”

How many a young person gave promise of success in life, whose career ended in disaster ! You have unquestionably known such. You have probably predicted that certain youthful individuals would achieve honorable prominence in their chosen occupations. They were gifted with generous sensibilities of heart and intellectual talents of a high order. The future offered them worthy inducements ; but they profited neither by their talents nor by their opportunities. They squandered their gifts and their opportunities in vicious company ; or they became indolent, unreliable, and dishonest. Instead of ascending the ladder of laudable fame ; instead of forcing open the portals of success and rendering their lives useful by great achievements,—they abandoned every noble resolve, prostituted their powers of soul and body to sinful corruption, and fell from the citadel of great enterprise to the hell of failure and remorse !

In various ways do persons fail in employing the

mental gifts of which they are only the custodians. Might not God rebuke them severely for the injudicious management of the intellectual riches over which He placed them as steward ? Might He not say to them : “ I gave you a heart endowed with amiable emotions ; in your breast were placed aspirations which would stimulate you to greater effort ; but you stifled these emotions, you dammed up the noble current of lofty aspiration, and you opened the flood-gates of basest passion ! I gave you a heart enriched with affection to love Me ; but you abused this gift. In compensation for My goodness, you gave Me hatred ! You had a heart capable of sympathy for the forlorn and the unhappy ; but you sneered at them, as if they were worms at your feet. You had a heart prone to enjoy the beauties of nature, but you feasted yourself upon the vile and the corrupting. Not satisfied with your own debasement, you occupied yourself in debasing and polluting innocence. Now give an account of your stewardship. Explain your follies. Return to Me the gifts imparted to you. What profit have you on them ? What interest has accrued ? The interests of malice, of misspent time, of opportunities wasted, of souls damned ! ” He may say to some : “ I gave you a tongue to defend innocence and protect justice ; I gave you this wondrous organ of speech to instruct the ignorant, to comfort the sorrowful, and to utter the truth. You misapplied this instrument of communication. You engaged in deception. You converted it from an instrument of protection into a weapon of treachery. You have slandered and vilified and calumniated the innocent. You have destroyed reputations, ruined prospects, devastated hopes. Hearts have suffered the poison of your words and the malice of your invectives. I gave you a tongue to praise Me—

your Creator—but you reviled Me, you blasphemed against Me. You would have torn Me from the universe, were it in your power. You have insinuated and boldly proclaimed that My existence is a farce, a superstition. You have infused doubt, have attacked indestructible principles of truth. You have had followers, but now is the time for an adjustment of your blasphemy, your ingratitude, and your treachery. I have borne with you for a time ; My patience and mercy are exhausted. Give an account of your villainous stewardship.”

Again He will demand an account from those who have made bad use of their intellectual faculties. These were bestowed for exalted purposes. Mankind should employ them especially in the service of his Creator, and for the benefit of himself and his fellow-man. However, you see them engaged in unholy undertakings. They are made the machinery of devastation. Plots are hatched to bring financial disasters upon the unwary and powerless. Unlawful discrimination is made because of religion or politics. The ends of justice are thwarted by cunningness and wealth. Legislatures are bribed, and thus the great intellect of the nation is dwarfed, or it is worse than annihilated. The nation's prosperity is retarded, her dignity impeached by public sentiment ; and if this be permitted to continue, will effect national disgrace.

In this manner and numerous other ways, talents and genius are turned from their true activity. Human ability, instead of reaching the zenith of attainment, where it would be the pride and glory of our country, is employed in mercenary labors, in unlaudable pursuits. Wonderful indeed that human intellect would toil to undermine the fabric of society, to cripple

private or public enterprise, or to corrupt government. Its great object—its only object, should be to build up the state, to enrich literature, to promote honest emulation, and to extend the domain of science. Above all these and beyond, is the noblest, the most exalted, the most refining use of your intellectual faculties ! Need I tell you this is the service of God ?

The uncreated Lord of all stewards will demand, and must obtain, a settlement of all accounts. If all His endowments have been well employed, if His gifts have been profitably invested, then He will place you over great things in His eternal kingdom.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it.
(St. Luke xix.—41.)

The tender affection of our Divine Lord for poor fallen human nature was manifested upon this memorable occasion, when He wept over the city of the Jews. There was the temple in which He had been worshipped by His chosen people. There, too, in that very same city live many devout persons still awaiting the coming of the Messiah. But, alas ! not a stone will be left upon a stone. Its magnificence must disappear forever. As He wept, He saw the past, the present, and the future of Jerusalem and the Jewish people ; he saw how often they became rebellious against His law ; how often their excesses had been curbed by punishment—by the punishment of a foreign foe, by their captivity. But their depravity had now become unendurable. His doctrine was soon to pass to the Gentile, and all that was magnificent in the existence of the Jewish race was ere long to be destroyed by the invader—not a stone was to be left upon a stone.

As He wept over the ill-fated city, might He not have rebuked its inhabitants in the following words : “ Alas ! I weep over you. The time of your visitation has come. I have loved you as a mother loves her child.

Out of the land of Pharaoh I led you. I broke asunder the shackles of your slavery. Through the sea, I gave you a safe passage. For forty years I kept you and fed you in the desert, that all taint of idolatry and corruption acquired in the land of strangers might be purged from your souls. Finally I brought you to the land of promise. I gave you patriarchs—holy men whose examples should have been your guide. I gave you prophets for your instructors; I did everything for you, but constantly you were rebellious. You have been a stiff-necked people. Sorry I am to say it, but it is true: I have raised up children, and they have abandoned Me. The time of your visitation has arrived. Not a stone will be left upon a stone. You shall be scattered, and your magnificence wasted, and strangers shall inhabit the sanctuary in which you once prayed; but now you have made it a den of thieves.”

If you pass over the long ages of Christianity, and come down to the now-expiring nineteenth century, will you not agree with me, that Jesus may weep again over the sad conditions existing among men. It is now over the Gentiles He may weep. In this age of material progress, but spiritual degeneracy, there is much cause for tears. In this age when the storms of infidelity and ætheistical notions break upon the promontory of the soul; when the fogs of immorality settle upon the mainlands of the intellect; when avarice parches and dries up the pure springs of the heart,—there is much to deplore. Notwithstanding our boasted progress—and indeed it cannot be denied that we are a progressive people—the great aim of life is gain. Gain, though unnumbered people suffer from this inexorable greed. The world is flooded with depravity. Religious doubt and agnostic propensities are everywhere rampant.

Everywhere is spiritual disorder, while many dare proclaim there is no God.

To be sure, the present age is not responsible for all this social turbulence. It had its origin with the so-called Reformation, when men rose against legitimate authority, and with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other, declared for what they termed religious freedom and liberty of thought ; but what was in reality a license for disorder. Protestants were arrayed against Catholics. Bitter controversies followed. Thought clashed with thought, and sometimes cruelty and often bloodshed were the consequences. The Bible was the revealed word of God—the infallible guide. But while they proclaimed its sacredness, they polluted its essence by their false translations and additions and subtractions. This is not fanciful notion I express. These charges are not born of my imagination, but based upon uncontrovertible evidences. But now what respect is shown toward this infallible guide ? Many of Protestantism's celebrated ministers declare it is not infallible, that it is not inspired ; yet some even venture so far as to hold it up to ridicule. Alas for human invention and human weakness !

This miscalled liberty of thought paved the avenues to pernicious systems of philosophy. One maintained that everything is God, and was called Pantheism. Another declaring that there is no God ; this is Atheism. Spiritualism, holding that everything is spirit, argued that there is no matter ; and the opposite teaching, that everything is material, that there is no spirit. This was termed by its supporters Materialism, and as a natural consequence denied the existence of God. These views were transmitted to France, where Diderot, Rousseau, and Voltaire flourished, ridi-

culing religion and giving vent to their own destructive notions. Thus society everywhere became infected with doubt and unbelief. Many priding themselves in their agnostic demands, clamored for proofs. "We will not believe," they said; "only those things which can be demonstrated to us. Reason is supreme! Adduce your evidences! If they satisfy our judgment, we shall acquiesce"; little thinking that humble things at their feet baffle their proud reason.

This spirit of intellectual independence is prevalent in this dying century. Doubt, Infidelity, and Agnosticism, and even Atheism, have now saturated a vast number of society. Well meaning people are perplexed, while others would tear God from the heavens, were it in their power. Compared with the downfall of Judaism, our age is more vitiated with false opinions, and more contaminated with immorality. Might not Jesus again weep over perverse human nature, over the degeneracy of our times; and in His tears tell many of our age: "You have wandered far from the path of truth, though I have placed in your midst the ark of salvation. I have established a Church in which you should abide and learn to be virtuous and holy. I have died on the cross to regenerate you; I have given you sacraments to be your strength and encouragement; I have fed you with My own body and blood, or have offered to do so,—but you have turned your faces from Me. It will be better for Jerusalem in the day of judgment than for you." In this deplorable manner could the Saviour of mankind justly address multitudes of our boasted civilization. He is patient in His justice and in His punishment of crime. Truly, He wishes not the death of a sinner, but that he may be converted and live.

In the midst of this confusion, surrounded by clashing opinions and enveloped by the enemies of religion and true liberty, is the great depositary of revealed truth and the unchangeable dispenser of divine faith. Amidst the storms of conflicting notions, the barque of St. Peter still rides calmly onward, unsubdued by the tempests and undiverted by the malice of men. At present her pilot is Leo XIII., and the polar star of her course is the God of the universe. Men of thought are studying her bearings, and are rushing to her for security. Upon her decks they will find safety against the icebergs of deception and tranquillity, without fear of being lost.

Catholics must not, however, permit themselves to be allured by avarice or desire of fame, from a strict adherence to Christian duty. Unlaudable ambition must be crushed in their hearts, before it asserts its unabatable strength. They should set good example that others may be edified. Their lives should be marked by a devout observance of the laws of God and man. Were they to drift away, they would soon be classed among the revilers of God's commandments and the teachings of God's Church. The enemy, sin and irreligion, would encompass them and straighten them on all sides and beat them flat to the ground. They, the living temples of the Holy Spirit, would be demolished, and not a stone upon a stone of the munificence of God's graces would be left. Fortify yourselves, therefore, against adversity ; buckle on the breast-plate of God's truth, that you may be impervious to the darts of the enemy, and that, enriched with the benedictions of heaven, victory may ever perch upon your banner.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Because everyone that exalteth himself, shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted. (Luke xviii. —14.)

My Dear Friends : The importance of humility is illustrated by this parable. This virtue is worth your recognition, and you should cultivate it most assiduously. Whatever is taught by the Saviour of the human race, deserves the attention of mankind. Its usefulness cannot be questioned, for Jesus errs not ; He is the divine Teacher, and His instructions elevate those who follow them. He knows what is best as well as what is injurious to you. To-day He exhorts you to avoid pride and practice humility. Upon the veracity of His unerring word, He tells you that the proud shall be humbled, and the humble shall be exalted. Learn from Him, therefore, to love humility. He, the Son of God, assures you of the reward attending the humble. The inspired writers teach the same truth. Those distinguished persons illumined by the Holy Spirit ; those men who grasped the thoughts of Almighty God and revealed them to man,—exhort to the same principle of life. Humility, they proclaim in many passages, bears happy fruit—fruit which nourishes man in his warfare upon earth, and renders him pleasing to both God and man ; which protects him

from many of the pitfalls of life, and merits the blessing of heaven. "*Before destruction, the heart of man is exalted ; and before he be glorified, it is humbled.*" (Prov. xviii.—12.) It is well, then, to cherish this virtue in your hearts. Every Catholic should do this, because it is recommended so highly by Him who knows all things. Do not think that humility belittles man. It exalts him, according to the unimpeachable words of your Saviour and your God. Humility is not abjection—it is not cowardice. It is devout submission to the laws of God and man. And to obey the Creator, truly becomes the creature. It is that nice pose of the soul which discerns things as they are ; which studies its environments and defects ; which acknowledges its own imperfections, while it makes allowance for the short-comings of others. Its views are not befogged by the vapors of pride, but keenly, justly, comprehensively, it weighs the good and the true and the false. It teaches that, when man errs, when he transgresses the laws of God, he should humble himself before his Creator and crave for pardon. It rebukes the transgressor who in his sins rants proudly, even defies the powers of the Omnipotent, who imagines he is a God, though polluted with almost every crime. This may be the disposition of the proud ; but "*It is better to be humbled with the meek, than to divide spoils with the proud.*" (Prov. xvi.—19.)

Humility is indispensable to the sagacious statesman, to the true philosopher, and the consummate artist. It is as useful to the smith at the forge, to the farmer at the plow, as to the erudite scholar. Indeed, no one can be a scholar who is proud. Pride blocks up the intellectual vision, impairs its comprehensiveness, blinds its investigations. No ; the scholar must neces-

sarily be a humble person. By his humility he recognizes the greatness of God, admires the wonderful works of creation, sees the masterpieces of the Omnipotent, acknowledges His mercies, and bows humbly before the All-Wise, in whose presence himself appears as he is, and therefore can best study himself and others. By humility he ascends to the highest peaks of human acquirement, and delves into the most profound recesses of investigation. He is not hampered by pride. He knows there are many things to learn, and that he has not grasped them all. In being humble, he is wise ; for, "*Where humility is, there also is wisdom.*" (Prov. xi.—2.)

The fruit of humility may also be gathered by those who walk in the lowly sphere of life. As we have remarked, it is essential to the blacksmith and the farmer, and in fact to all who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. They are poor, but they are humble. With the lamp of humility they study their environments. While they possess sweet contentment whence opens every joy, they perceive higher attainments may be reached, and they reach them because he that humbles himself will be exalted. Even though they wish no other occupation in life, they will make the one they have more successful than it is possible for the proud to do. Moreover, whatever they do acquire, it will be won by honesty. Their acquaintances will praise their integrity and commend their honest endeavors. They will be respected by their neighbors, and they will leave to their children a precious inheritance—the good name and credit of humble, but energetic, honorable parents—a legacy devoutly to be desired.

Some people think the rich only are proud, and the poor humble. This is an erroneous notion. Not all

the rich are proud ; many, indeed, the majority are thoughtful and humble. There are some who have sprung from poverty to sudden wealth, and the height of fortune to which they have ascended, has made them dizzy. They cannot bear the presence of those who knew them in other days. They turn with well defined disgust from the poor and the shabby. Wealth has made them proud, and we may add, robbed them of their common sense. From the portals of their hearts, humility is banished, and indeed every noble trait of character has departed with this tender virtue. They assume fantastic airs which they think belong to aristocracy, but they are rather the property of the clown.

The rich who are great in heart and intellect, cherish that beautiful virtue which throws a Christian lustre about their opulence and reflects the charity of their purse. Such are rich in pocket, but poor in spirit ; and "*Blessed,*" says the God of wealth, "*are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God.*" With their money they alleviate misery, and the prayers of the poor follow them to the throne of the Most High.

It is, on the other hand, a mistaken notion that all the poor are humble. Many of them become offensive on account of their pride. They are in straitened circumstances on account of pride, and until they are awakened to their folly, they will ever remain not only in narrowness of means, but in smallness of character. They will not learn. They have no energy, no application ; and if they have any economy, it is only so far as they are compelled from the force of the want of resources. Others of their own rank are beneath their notice, and their affectation is sometimes insufferable. "*Pride cometh before a fall,*" and they may yet be hum-

bled. It would be wiser for them to humble themselves, to enter into life's labors with earnestness, to toss away every proud notion, and be determined to achieve something, though such achievement costs the sweat of their brow. They will be the better for their industry; they will be happier and more contented. They will improve their condition by humbling themselves.

You will now concede that humility is useful in the temporal concerns, and let me tell you, it is far more serviceable in spiritual affairs. Every Catholic should make humility a part of his daily life. It will draw down the benedictions of heaven upon him. Pride bars out the graces of God, while humility is a channel through which divine grace is brought to the soul. "*Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart,*" says the eternal Teacher of the human race. "Learn of Me. Behold Me in the Crib at Bethlehem, your God and Saviour, wrapped in swaddling clothes. Why should you be proud? Pride is an injurious tinsel. Cast it from you, and clothe yourselves with Christian virtue." Learn, too, of the Blessed Virgin as she bends over her Divine Infant in the manger. The greatest of God's creatures, the Mother of His only Son; sheltered by a stable. Behold, too, her exaltation. "*The Lord has regarded my humility; henceforth all nations will call me blessed.*" Blessed for what? Blessed on account of the humility which found such astonishing favor with Almighty God. She was humble, and Omnipotence made her the Mother of His co-eternal Son. Learn of the martyrs, of the saints, of the Fathers, and the scholars of the Church. They are illustrious in the history of Christianity. What made them so? Their humility. They imitated the lives of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; and now they are exalted forever with their heavenly

Master, while their memories will never fade as long as the Church endures, and that is to the end of time.

Tom Moore, the celebrated Irish poet, preached an interesting sermon on humility in the following beautiful words: "Humility, that low, sweet root whence every virtue shoots." How true, how beautiful is not this expression of the poet! From this humble virtue springs all other Christian acts. It is the mother of them all. From its roots arise branches upon which the other virtues live and have their nourishment. Among these you perceive the great theological virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Yes, the humble person is prudent. His humility fosters prudence. He sees things as they are. He examines them carefully. Dangers are foreseen, and are either avoided or overcome. He is called a prudent man, a wise man; for as the poet Burns says: "Cautious, prudent, self-control is wisdom's root." His prudence brings him honors, for humility ever weaves laurels for the brow of those who wait upon her. He is a just man. He does not injure any one. He neither steals nor cheats. He pays his debts; but what is better, he seldom contracts them, and then only those which are necessary. No bribe can influence him. No flattery can warp his understanding. He stands before the community an honest man. He fears God, loves his country, and obeys the Church. He is an ornament of society; and if his influence is extensive, he is one of his country's fortified garrisons. He is just because he is humble, and he is blessed for his justice. "*Blessed art they who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled.*" He is blessed here by his tranquillity of soul, by the appreciation of his friends; nay, even his enemies respect him, and hereafter he will be eternally blessed by the God of justice.

Fortitude is another of his distinguishing characteristics. This is born of his humility. In the vicissitudes of life he may have much to endure, but he will combat adversity with a brave heart. Should his enemies for a time triumph over him, calmly he will consider their victory, and patiently await until the effects of the battle will have passed. In defeat, he appears more of a man than in his successes. Fortified by humility, he has the strength of patience and the courage of forbearance. He goes quietly on as if nothing had happened to disturb his serenity, and ultimately he triumphs. In all the caprices of fickle fortune—in sickness, disappointment, and adversity, he never thinks of piercing his heart with a dagger, nor blowing out his brains. No ; his hope looks beyond the skys. He has the fortitude to withstand these attacks, for his armor is prayer, his confidence the promises of his God, and his defence the right arm of the Most High.

He is temperate—temperate in eating and drinking, temperate in his speech, temperate in all things. He avoids excesses, because these are contrary to humility. By his tongue he has embittered the life of no one; and no scandal has arisen from his carousals, for he does not indulge in such. His life is one of edification. Neither ruin nor evil example can be attributed to him. He knows the secret of right living, and he practices what he knows. He is therefore healthier, happier, and wiser for being humble. From this virtue, as you have seen, comes forth all his ennobling qualities of body and mind. Prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance are his, together with all the other virtues. He is a Christian man ; a man beloved by God ; a man who will pass tranquilly from earth to a home of endless joy : *for he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

And they bring to Him one who is deaf and dumb; and they besought Him to lay His hand upon him. (St. Mark vii.—32.)

My Dear Friends: The Sacred Scriptures tell you to-day of a person deaf and dumb, who was brought to Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. They beseech Him to lay His divine hand upon this afflicted mortal. He listens to their prayer, takes him aside from the multitude, and by His divine power removes the impediments. What joy must not that one experience when he hears the warblings of birds and the murmurings of the streams as they flow along. What music in the sounds of Nature for him. He never heard them before.

To these two great sources of pleasure, he was a total stranger; but now he hears—hears not only the poetry of the winds, the purling of waters, the sweet lays of birds, but the entrancing charm of the human voice; nay, more, he hears his Heavenly Benefactor speaking to him, and feels the inexpressible influence of His words. Once miserable, he now rejoices. He holds converse with his friends. The mysterious organ of speech now gives forth intelligent sound. The fetters which bound it, are now broken; and the first use he makes of it, is to praise his Benefactor. No wonder that the multitude were overwhelmed with astonish-

ment, and began to voice their sentiments in tones of admiration. No wonder they continued to publish this extraordinary manifestation of power. No wonder they saw in it the hand of the Omnipotent.

This stupendous miracle suggests to our mind many thoughts. Permit me to present a few of them to you this morning. It cannot be denied that God has often touched the deaf ear of society, opened it to the voice of His Church, and to the many mercies Himself has bestowed. But man as readily forgets as he learns. To-day he will acknowledge God's goodness, to-morrow forget or deny it. In the morning he will praise God, but ere night, will deliberately transgress His law. Man rises up against his Eternal Benefactor. His ears are open, but he hears not ; he will not hear. His tongue is capable of speech, but he will not praise the One Who has blessed him with such a marvellous faculty. Ofttimes it is used in offending the divine Giver, and to pervert others.

In this age a divine Healer is needed to touch the ears of human intellect, that it may awaken to its folly and its crimes ; that it may hearken to the voice of God, entreating through His Church ; that it may bow down before the omnipotence of God, acknowledge its faults and extricate itself from the dangers which threaten to engulf it. A divine Healer is needed to touch the strings which bind down the pure motives of the heart, that this receptacle of love will return to its God ; that it will abandon its wicked passions or at least curb them ; that it will withdraw from the whirlpool of licentiousness in which it is tossed. In this age crime is rampant. Every device which the perversity of man can invent, is enlisted in the cause of immorality. Books, papers, pictures, agents—these and many other means are taken

to disgrace our age and accelerate the decay of society. Impurity everywhere, until the votaries at her lecherous shrine now know no shame. They boast of their excesses, and glory in their filth, and refuse to reform. Are these to be the parents of future society? Are these the ones to whom the perpetuity of the nation is to be intrusted? Are these the ones who will mould opinion and direct the ship of a state?

“ Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.”

From this terrible state of immorality arises the rashness and sins of married life. We shall not enter into a consideration of the secreted sins which are devastating society. No; the daily papers give us, alas! a copious record of public crime, which is of itself sufficient proof of the degeneracy of modern society. What! can you call any nation moral when her courts are overstocked with divorce suits? The sacredness of marriage life is disregarded. The husband or wife, or both, living under the influence of modern inconstancy, become infected by the immoral spirit of the times. They transgress without shame or regret. To silence the latter and disguise the former, they appeal to the courts. A bill of divorce is granted to this pure wife and virtuous husband! If they are persons of any note, the press teems with sensational evidence taken during the trial. Their secret alliance with others, their questionable friendship, their escapades, their violation of the marriage vow—all break upon the public mind, whose appetite has grown sharp for such scandalous accounts. Do you call this portentous state of society chaste? Do you maintain it is one calculated to promote Christianity? Do you call this advanced civilization? If so, away with such civilization! Away

with such corruption ! Away with this devastating influence ! You are striking blows at the pillars of society, which are already tottering. The wrath of God will be kindled, and visitation will come on the nation, as lamentable and destructive as that which befell the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha.

This unchaste, carnal life begets other enormous sins. It is a monster itself, and it gives birth to other monsters as heinous as itself. These are murders, suicides, theft, embezzlement, and drunkenness, and a whole score of other transgressions. These appear to increase in number in proportion to the unchastity of the epoch, until at the present day, they are as frightful in number as they are appalling in their consequences. Ancient Rome, upon the verge of her downfall, was not more polluted than our own country, and our country is no worse than some others in this respect. Can this be a Christian country ? Should we boast of our Christian civilization, of our unequalled progress, when these awful crimes are so numerous ? when homicides multiply ? when man and woman in their disappointments, in their rage, in their remorse, dare sever the thread of life and terminate their own existence ? Human nature, exhausted by sin, plunges into the gulf, hoping to sink into forgetfulness, and to end forever its existence. But the soul survives the shock. The poor soul, sickened by excesses, disturbed by perversity, lives to answer for the crimes done in the flesh. And the body, too, will suffer when reunited to the soul which it tried to destroy. Amidst all this disorder, amidst all these abominations, who thinks of God ? who thinks of His commandments ? who hears His voice crying to the deaf and the dumb of our age : "You shall not commit adultery. You shall not corrupt the innocent. You shall not obtain bills of

divorce. You shall not be another Cain, reddening your hands with the blood of your brother. You shall not arise in your defiance of My eternal laws and terminate the life I gave you" ? Who listens and obeys ? Many, we are happy to say ; but millions there are who do not—millions whose God is rapine, embezzlement, oppression of the poor, and impurity. They do not hear. They are deaf ; their deafness is an unmistakable sign of the sins of society and its consequent decay.

Our age is one of extremes ; but these extremes are found in wickedness. Evil triumphs, not like the roaring lion of which St. Paul speaks, but the subtle serpent, which charms while it destroys. It is time for persons interested in the human race, who wish for the reformation of society ; for its purity and elevation, to unite with the Catholic Church in beating back this army of vice and crime which are the cancers of our period. As the new century appears, a new civilization may arise upon the ruins of the past—a purer, a more Christian civilization. If something is not accomplished to dissipate the errors of our day, and to banish its sinful proclivities, a just God will cease to be patient ; He will hurl His anathemas at the head of society. Wrath shall take the place of mercy, and what He cannot accomplish by gentleness, He will execute by severity. If the peoples of the earth will not obey Him admonishing, entreating, threatening, through His divinely constituted authority, the Catholic Church, He will chastise them, and His chastisement will bring the people to their senses. If he cannot dissipate the deafness and obstinacy of the intellect ; if He cannot expel the heaviness thereof caused by sin ; if He cannot do this, I say, by His grace, He will by His revenging, chastising hand, and then will the race of man mourn. If the heart, steeled by

impurities, is impervious to His touch, if it remain in its uncontrite condition—He will melt it into submission by the rod of punishment. He is patient ; but His patience will not always brook insults. He will conquer the proud, sinful spirit of our age, as He often did the ages that are passed.

Endeavor, then, my Christian friends, to be submissive to the law of God. Be docile. When Jesus touches your soul, when His grace removes the deafness of your intellect and the dumbness of your heart, acknowledge His mercy. Repent for your sins. Do not persevere in wickedness, nor associate with iniquity, nor assist in advancing the evils of the age. These things bring ruin. These are the qualities of degeneracy and the attributes of hell. A noble work is yours. It consists in loving and obeying God, and co-operating with Him in the conversion of others. Pray that God may ever illumine your understanding and sever any pernicious sin that fetters your heart ; that you may praise Him and publish the beneficence of your Saviour and your God Who does all things well.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

And thy neighbor as thyself. (Luke x.—27.)

My Dear Friends : This subject is so familiar to you, that you are prone to say : “ We have heard it often expounded. We have considered it ourselves, have weighed it closely, and have made it a rule of our lives. There is not anything new to be offered on this theme.” This may be all very true. That it is a trite subject, none will deny ; but that everyone obeys this great principle, is very questionable. You may sound it to its depths ; you may analyze it,—but do you observe, in your intercourse with others, this divine command ? This is the question to be answered by everyone in his own heart. Moreover, after you have conned it over in your minds carefully, do you understand it in all its bearings ? If you do, I must acknowledge, you have been blessed in your researches : for, having considered it prudently and having consulted the Doctors of the Church upon it, I must admit that the subject affords some difficulties.

You are aware that the lawyer who addressed Our Lord did not properly understand whom he may regard as his neighbor. “ Who is my neighbor,” he inquires. Jesus cites a case. A man fell among robbers. He was left in a critical condition. Two travellers, a Priest and a Levite, passed him by without offering any assist-

ance. A Samaritan, touched at the sight of the wounded man, rendered him suitable help. Now our Saviour asks the lawyer : "Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to him who fell among the robbers," and he answered, the Samaritan. "*Go thou and do likewise,*" was the injunction placed upon the lawyer. Hence it appears that the Priest and Levite were not neighbors to the wounded man, and the question arises : "Should the unfortunate man, upon his recovery, treat them as neighbors ? Should he love them as himself ? Should he not love his benefactor more than those heartless persons who left him alone to die ? Does not our Saviour make an implied distinction when He puts the question : "Which of these three in your opinion, was neighbor to him who fell among the robbers ?" You should note, however, that the wounded man was a Jew ; that the Jews disliked the Samaritans, and held them in contempt. But the good Samaritan forgot all this. He forgot that the Jew despised him ; forgot that there was any difference between them. He only thought of his sufferings and how to relieve them. Mark now that here you have an example of one person doing good to his enemy—treating him as he would wished to be treated. And Our Lord said to the lawyer, and He says to everyone : "*Do likewise.*" At least we must conclude from this that whoever is in want may claim our aid, and that we are obliged to assist him, if we are able. That there is a difference in the esteem and love due to people, needs no illustration ; for duty commands us to love, first our parents, then our relatives, and next our friends and benefactors.

At this stage of our remarks, another difficulty may present itself. You may ask : "To what extent are

we allowed to speak of the faults of others?" Let me say that all the faults or transgressions of the human family can be arranged into two classes: those which begin and end chiefly with the perpetrator, which usually injures no one but the doer; and those which passed from the doer to another, which inflict injury upon another. Let us illustrate with a few cases. An example of the first class is found in the drunkard. He may be a very good-hearted man. It is evident he does good to others but wrongs himself. In this class are placed many of the sins against charity, and it is wise and charitable never to talk unkindly about the unfortunate who belong to this category. Persons of the second class may be criticised, and criticised severely; still, your criticism must be just. Supposing you have dealt a long time with a store-keeper. You have left him considerable money. You ask a favor of him. He refuses. Nay, more; he adds insult and injury to refusal. Are you bound to continue to deal with him? By no means. But you say, do I not love him less than I did? In fact, it looks as if I hated him. Moreover, am I not obliged to love those who wrong me? Again, here is a politician. Allow me to say here that these examples are used because they are familiar, and have no special application to anyone present. You have voted for this man, have often sustained him by your influence. You discover at length that he is unworthy of your support—that he is a rascal. Are you obliged to give him still your vote? I answer: no, you are not. But you love him less. Probably. You must remember that every person can use what theologians call *jus suum*, his right or privilege. It is your privilege to purchase goods from whom-

soever you please, and it's your privilege to vote for any person you wish. In this matter, your action cannot be, or at least should not be, construed as hatred to anyone. Can you speak of these wrongs inflicted upon you? Assuredly you can. Yea, you are sometimes obliged to speak about them. Let us pursue this thought a little farther. To elucidate this point more clearly, suppose a man steals your pocket-book or burns your house. Are you going to keep silent? Do you think that charity commands you to conceal his crime? Oh, no, you will say; and I agree with you. Your charity for yourself and the community, demands that you denounce him to the proper authorities, that his infamy may be punished. So it is in all other cases in this class. You are not expected to remain mute while your enemy tries to trample you down. But again I say to you, you must be just.

There is one thing you must positively avoid. It is misrepresentation. You must not venture to tell a falsehood about anyone, be he friend or foe. Do not imagine you can assail a person with impunity, that you can drag down his reputation into the mire of abuse, or that you can falsely detract from the honorable estimate which society has formed of him. Though he be your enemy, though he be a weakling, and you great and important, you dare not misrepresent him. If you do, you must make reparation. You complain of the person who steals your purse, or that burns your house, but these are paltry considerations when compared with a person's reputation. The former is incomparably nothing when compared with the latter.

You sometimes see two who are warm friends.

But winds of contention blow upon them. Storms of anger break forth. They are as dishonorable in their abuse of each other as they were apparently sincere in their friendship. Every fault or affliction or misfortune which befell either one for half a century, is reviewed. They are like two rapid-fire guns hurling at each other volumes of bitterest invective, and whether they are men or women, by their warfare they prove how small and mean they are. One will say: "I knew him when he was a drunkard. I saw him fall into a gutter. His clothes were in tatters, his face in a horrible condition. Behold him now—how stately he walks, how pompous he has become!" Would you not prefer to see him advance in the social scale than see him forever in disorder? Ought you not rejoice in seeing a person building himself up and becoming a respectable man? Should you not thank God for giving him the strength to reform and the resolution to remain a sober, honest man? Others will speak of secrets intrusted to them in the time of sorrow. They hesitate not to violate confidence and betray friendship. The deeper they wound the heart, the greater is their rejoicement; but the arrow which wounds, poisons the archer. He makes himself contemptible in the eyes of the community. He displays the perfidy of his own black heart, and honest men and women should avoid such characters.

When your enemy is in trouble, do not rejoice. Always protect yourself against his assaults; still, never stoop so low as to attack him when he is down. When disaster has prostrated him at your feet, when he is in your grasp, do not be so devilish as to assault him then. He is now an object of your pity, not your revenge. Be the good Samaritan. Bend over him kindly. Pour

into his wounds the wine and oil of kind words. Obey the injunction of Our Lord: "*Go thou and do in like manner.*" You will thereby demonstrate that you possess truly a human heart. You will be greater in your kindness than you can be in any revenge you could take of a fallen foe. Moreover, your enemy may not be all to blame. You cannot know the details of everything. Indeed, we may say you do not know the details of anything. You learn from history and Sacred Scripture, that God makes use of one nation to chastise another, and one individual to rebuke another. Your offence against God may be of such a nature as to call for chastisement, and God uses your so-called enemy as an instrument of punishment. You are chastened. Your obstinacy subdued, your proud head bowed, you return to God, imploring His aid and counsel. You are converted. You are again sanctified by the grace of God, and all through your enemy. You have suffered ; but your reward more than compensates for your heart-aches. Again, an enemy improves our intellect. He compels us to study persons and things closer than we would otherwise do. He makes us sagacious. By means of him, we gather an abundance of experience. We grow wiser and more cautious under his training ; and with the assistance of God, we shall triumph, and our enemy withdraw with his banner trailing in the dust. Let us then be brave in the struggle, but honorable to the conquered foeman. Let us be kind to our enemy when affliction shackles him. Let us beg God that we may know ourselves and appreciate what others are. Let us cultivate in our hearts the spirit of the good Samaritan.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger. (St. Luke xvii.—18.)

My Dear Friends : You may be astonished at the behavior of the nine lepers. You may condemn them for their ingratitude, and call them vile ingrates. It is wonderful that they did not return and thank their great Benefactor. When they saw themselves clean, when they felt that health once more animated their bodies, it is wonderful, I say, that the enthusiasm of their hearts did not compel them to hasten back to the divine Physician, and prostrated before Him, pour forth their souls in happy expressions of joy and thanksgiving. But only one returned. There was only one who had greatness of soul, only one who had magnanimity of heart to be grateful.

How forgetful ! you will say ; how disthankful ! The least they could do, you will maintain, was to thank God for His beneficence. This would be natural, in your estimation ; for everyone should esteem his friend, and be grateful to his benefactor. Still, judging from observation and experience, judging from the actual manifestations of ingratitude, gratefulness

appears to be unnatural. The most of people are ungrateful. In the example given us to-day, we find there was only one in ten who was thankful, while intercourse with society demonstrates that the proportion of ingrates is even greater than this. From these data you may conclude that gratitude is unnatural. It cannot be denied, however, that there is a criterion of human judgment, a feeling of the heart which recoils at the rehearsal of ingratitude, and the soul is oppressed when suffering from the unkindness of a should-be friend. What is the cause of this base, unthankful behavior? You need hardly be told that it is selfishness—selfishness which dams up the noble fountains of the heart, sullyng the currents of human life, created by Almighty God to fructify the soul of man. God did not intend it to be so; and if the heart becomes insensible to the debts which it owes, the fault is not attributable to God, but to our own narrowness and meanness of character.

At least, favor should be repaid by favor. It is well to return good for evil. But what think you of those who compensate kindness with injury and insult? One good turn deserves another; yet how often has this proverb failed! How often the contrary happens! How often does a benefactor feel the darts of ingratitude! The memory of kindness bestowed is written upon sand, and the winds of selfishness soon obliterate that memory. How quickly the nine lepers forgot their Benefactor! Health now animates their bodies, and ingratitude supplants the cry for help. The gift bestowed does not make them greater of heart, though it makes them sound of body. In the affairs of life, this result of conferring gifts is oftentimes noticeable. It pervades all classes of society. The opulent

overlook the Author of their wealth, and the poor forget likewise the Author of their health.

Ungratefulness can be easily observed among Catholics. They go to confession ; the leprosy of their souls is healed, but they are not sufficiently mindful of the beneficence conferred by Jesus in the Sacrament of Penance. Before confession, they cry to Jesus for mercy. The leprosy of the soul afflicts them. They experience the depressing, agonizing pain of sin. The soul is dreary. Embarrassment intensifies the dreariness. Despondency, perhaps, is near, increasing or trying to increase the penalty of sin. The spirit is oppressed, and in its anguish pleads : "*Jesus, Master, have mercy on me.*" Jesus comforts the soul. Strength is given to overcome the frailty of nature. Resolution to make a good confession conquers despondency. The grace of God is influencing the soul, and Jesus answers the forlorn entreaty by saying : "*Go show yourselves to the priest.*" The penitent approaches the tribunal of God's mercy. The blood of Jesus answers the cry of grief, and the soul is replenished with beauty and hope and joy. Sin is banished. The gloom of the soul gives place to buoyancy of heart. The sinner is again an acknowledged heir to heaven and a child of the Sacred Heart. But mark you. Oh, corroding ingratitude ! The penitent hastens from the church. Scarcely a moment is given to thank God for His untold favors. O cleansed leper ! O purified soul ! can you be so insensible as not to remember your miseries and your wretchedness of a few moments ago ? In your joyfulness of heart, do you in this manner forget the One Who converted your sadness into joy and your sighs into peace ? Out the penitent goes. Ah ! frail human creature, you have no time to kneel before your Saviour

in the tabernacle and in the fervor of your gratitude pour out gratefully your heart in thanksgiving. No, not even a few minutes to give expression to that gratefulness which should animate your soul. Are joy and peace and good fortune the enemies of gratitude? Do they parch the heart and dry up the springs of affectionate remembrance. It may, in part, be true that prosperity is a barren, desolating air, famishing the great fruits of the heart; but still, such penitents can hardly be excused on account of such mitigating conditions. Nay, say rather that ignorance is the cause, and that ingratitude springs from ignorance; and that ignorance and ingratitude have their habitation in a heart unschooled in beauty, sublimity, and gratefulness. Lest you may misunderstand me, I would add that by ignorance is not meant illiteracy or the other concomitants of poverty; for wealth and learning are not seldom ungrateful to the eternal Dispenser of all things.

Such a penitent comes the following morning to receive Holy Communion. On the previous evening some extenuating reasons might have been presumed in excuse for his haste. But now see him on Sunday morning standing outside the door, gazing at this one and that. Why does he not enter the church, and prostrated before God, thank His Divine Master for the blessing conferred in the Sacrament of Penance? Why does he not prepare his soul for a saintly greeting to His Lord and Redeemer, when this Redeemer comes to visit him? You do not know? Well, I do not wonder. His conduct is so absurd and vexatious, that it is not easy to assign a reason for his coldness of spirit, unless you ascribe his woful condition to stupidity and ingratitude.

After Mass, does he remain in the church to speak to

His Saviour words of gratitude? Does he recognize that Jesus has come to him to dwell as a guest? Does he linger in the temple of God to entertain his august Visitor? Alas! he does not. Pity of pity, that his heart is so ribbed with steel, that it cannot expand with one loving, one affectionate, one grateful emotion of thanksgiving! How great have been the mercies bestowed upon this penitent, and apparently how lowly he estimates them! He does not know enough to be thankful. Were I to see him before Mass time and request him to go into the church, he would become enraged at my audacity. But this rage is a deformed child of ingratitude, and the heart which nurtures both must be a desolate waste.

Now, might not Jesus say to such a person: "I did more for you than I did for the lepers. At baptism I robed you in the garment of spotless innocence. I formed a covenant with you—gave you a guarantee of eternal happiness. The only condition demanded, was that you should keep your part of the contract. When you violated this, when you rendered it null by your transgressions, I took you by the hand, and led you to the regenerating Sacrament of Penance. I there renewed the bond between us, forgave you every infringement of the contract; nay, more, I fed you with My own Body and Blood. I did more for you than mother ever did for her child. How have you repaid Me? Your thanks were ingratitude and your prayer blasphemy. You have abused My gifts, you have desecrated My name, you have outrageously broken the contract in every way which your malice could invent or your powers accomplish. And now, again, when I have pardoned you all, you have not gratitude enough to thank Me." Thus your Saviour could address many

a Catholic. Is it not a shame that any penitent acts in this base manner? What monstrous ingratitude! What stupid insensibility!

Be grateful, then, one to another. Be grateful to your God for all His gifts. Ingratitude bespeaks a narrow soul, a small, sneaking, selfish heart. People will soon spot the ingrate, the cute, sly, cunning knave who not only looks to his own interests, but will forsake a friend, or barter honor or betray confidence—do anything, to accomplish his designs. Beware of him or her! Neither is to be trusted. Again, ingratitude leads not to greatness in any sphere of life; nor does the ingrate achieve notable success. The noble elements of society are against him; and how can he expect to win, if He Who rules the destinies of men is not with him? Can you imagine an ingrate giving the enrapturing touch of genius to a picture? Can you conceive him giving life to the marble and developing thereon the ennobling virtues of heart and soul? Ah! no; it would be as easy to imagine a brute of the field accomplishing so grand a work of art.

Be thankful, therefore, that your soul may expand under the magic influence of gratitude. Be thankful for every favor, and be slow, very slow to forget any act of kindness conferred upon you. Especially be grateful to your God, and be forever mindful of the gratitude owed to Him. St. Augustine happily remarks: "We cannot carry in our hearts anything better, nor pronounce with the lips, nor express with the pen, than thanks be to God. Man cannot say anything shorter, hear anything more pleasing, understand anything greater, nor do anything more fruitful, than this." Be thankful to God, I repeat; your gratitude will bear fruit, and God will exalt you for your mindfulness of

His gifts. Be not an ingrate ; for as St. Bernard beautifully tells us : “ Ingratitude is a parching wind, drying up the fountains of good, and receiving not the dews of mercy nor the floods of grace.” Let us conclude with the words of the Psalmist : “ *My soul, praise the Lord and never forget His beneficence.*” (Ps. cii.)

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. (St. Matt. vi.—33.)

My Dear Friends : In our age, indeed in every age, many have neglected to follow this salutary admonition. But as the ages passed are registered in the annals of the dead, it behooves us to consider its application to the society of the present period. Were the people of the earth to observe this divine injunction, many of the ills of life would disappear. There would be an equilibrium established among the various grades of society—an equilibrium produced by a scrupulous observance of this day's Gospel, an equilibrium bringing joy to the hearts of everyone. There would be no defamation of character ; there would be no theft, no corruption among the officials of state, nor drunkenness among the lowly. Every man would be honest, every man would be truthful, every man would be a Christian. The soul would soar to the centre of its gravity, Almighty God. Its aspirations would be moored in the bosom of His justice. Harmony would reign among the different nations of the earth, and tranquillity would nurse the feverish elements of society into healthful peace.

All this may seem to you chimerical—an Ethiopian dream. But can you deny its truth? It is evident that such is not the condition of society; but the fault is ours. Man does not obey the instructions of his Maker, and the result of his disobedience is misery. You cannot truthfully deny that mankind would repose in profitable peace were he to seek for the kingdom of God and His justice. Were everyone to centre his ambition in Almighty God; were everyone to seek Him as the first great motive of life,—then no one could wrong another. You may say, however, that such ambition would destroy enterprise, would impoverish commerce, would effeminate the race. Yes, if embezzlement, chicanery, deceit, treachery, and oppression stabilitate enterprise, sustain commerce, and give intellect and sinew to the race. Then, indeed, what you say may be true; but it is false. Do not think that seeking first the kingdom of God and His justice will make you idlers. In the Gospel read to you there is nothing incompatible to industry. Does not God speak the truth? Does He not know what is beneficial to your welfare? Or will He advise you contrary to your best interests? There is no contradiction between the decree uttered by Almighty God after the fall of our first parents and that expressed by His Divine Son, Jesus Christ. The former declared that man must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, the latter exhorts us to seek first the kingdom of God and His justice. There is no contradiction here. The declaration of our Saviour does not abnegate the order given to Adam. It stimulates it—it makes the reward of that sweat, of that toil, meritorious here and hereafter. It directs it in its legitimate course, doing injury to nobody, but improving the condition of all.

Mark, our Saviour says : *You cannot serve two masters.* This is true, because our Divine Lord said it, and this truth is verified by every-day experience. You cannot serve two masters. You cannot serve God and money at the same time. Nor can you serve God and literature, or the sciences, or anything else. Note, He does not say that these things are incompatible to the service of God. He does not say you cannot serve God and possess wealth, be the wealth that of money, science, art, or distinction. No ; but He says you cannot serve these things and Him. Every great emotion of the heart, every lofty aspiration, should be to Him ; and having offered to Him the first fruits of our hearts and our souls and our labor, then we should toil assiduously to earn an honest living. The advantage of such a mode of action is clear to everyone who gives himself the trouble to think.

How kind it is on the part of our Saviour to instruct us so wisely ! and how prudent is that person who is guided by such wisdom ! You will, upon reflection, admit that it is most advantageous to follow such a guide. For is it not foolish for man to forget or abandon his God in the acquisition of temporal goods ? His whole heart—his very life—is concentrated on these things. His soul is agitated ; he undertakes every arduous task, exposes himself to every danger to secure the perishable, while he disregards the everlasting, his immortal soul. For these things he turns from God. He cares not whether there is a God or not. He has no regard for any person. He will be an oppressor, if he can, were such a thing necessary for his success. And now the question arises, how long will he enjoy these possessions ? He knows not. He may forfeit his life in the attempt to acquire them. One thing is

certain, he will not have them long. He must die ; and who will mourn his loss? Who will pray for him ? Who, with a grateful remembrance, will besiege the throne of mercy in his behalf ? Why, he did not pray for himself! He deserted Almighty God ! Can he expect that others will be more charitable toward him than he was to himself ? Can he confidently implore for mercy from God, Whom he despised? Will he find mercy, who never manifested it toward himself or others ? He dies ; he is forgotten. How wisely, then, it is to seek first the kingdom of God and His justice.

Do not think, however, that the rich always depart from God. A man may possess massive wealth, and still be poor in spirit, while the poor may hunger after riches—may make their few dollars their God. As St. Bernard says: “ The covetous man hungers after riches, and is a slave; the believer despises them, and is a lord. The former in his possession is a beggar, the latter, despising them, keeps them.” He keeps them in subjection; he does not allow them to become his master or himself their slave. He rules over them; he has only one master, and that One is his God. According to the rules prescribed by that Master, he acquires his goods, and he employs them to his own advantage and for the assistance of others. Truly this person is a lord. He manages his affairs as though he controlled them.

Again, my Christian friends, were mankind universally to obey the divine exhortation to seek the justice of God first, what harmony, what prosperity, what peace would we not enjoy ! Banks would not fail—plundering the public, and destroying both confidence and credit. There would be no embezzlement. Dishonesty would hide itself. Suicide would be unknown. Justice would expel corruption. Our State legislatures would not be

bought nor sold. The Senate and House of Representatives of the nation would be composed of honorable, honest, patriotic men. They would be the pride and the boast of our country. Their great ambition would be to enhance the glory of the nation, to enforce the equity of her laws, and perpetuate her greatness! They would deserve and obtain not only the gratitude of their constituencies, but unborn generations would admire while they would perpetuate their memories! Moreover, there would be no strikes; capital would not oppress labor, and labor would respect capital. Each would acknowledge and protect the interests of the other. The employer would love his men, and his men love him in return. They would all be Christian men, all striving for the great end of life—endless happiness and peace with their God. Conflict would yield to peace. Peace would beget prosperity. Prosperity would bestow with a kindly hand an abundance upon all. Nor would this happy state generate indolence; for God forbids sloth. He encourages industry and activity, research and acquisitions. God Who is pure act, Who is eternal activity, could not favor indolence, sloth, or idleness.

Our Saviour impresses the importance of His instruction on us by calling our attention to the lily. Solomon, in the richness of his robes, was not so well attired as one of these. The birds of the air, the grass of the field, are vivid examples of God's providence. And is not the life more than the raiment? Is not the soul of more importance than any temporal wealth? The immortal soul, created to the image and likeness of its God, deserves not to be hampered by the things of earth, but live for its Creator. Besides, might not the Son of God, in citing these illustrations of His provi-

dence, point to the universe ; might He not have said : “ Behold the heavens and the earth ! behold the countless worlds around you ! behold the wonders at your feet ! study the motions of these spheres ; reflect upon the magnificence around you ; see everything cared for, see everything performing its duty. Man only, an intelligent being, dares to violate My laws—dares to disregard his duties. But his violations produce discord, and discord will have its punishment.” You need no illustration to understand all this. You see how everything is preserved. You observe the eternal vigilance of God, watching over the universe. No sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge ; no spire of grass withers without His omniscience noting its decay. Every act of injustice, every disorder, every sin, is known to Him. Why not have confidence in Him ? Why not believe Him ? Why not obey His commands and exhortations by seeking first the kingdom of God and His justice ? For, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled—filled with tranquillity during their sojourn on earth, filled with never-ceasing joys in the mansions of their Eternal Father.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

And when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother ; and she was a widow. (St. Luke vii.—12.)

My Dear Friends : To-day a mournful spectacle is presented for your consideration—a marvellous scene indeed. Jesus is approaching the city of Naim. His disciples and a large multitude are with Him. The Redeemer of the world—the Son of God—is on foot. He is probably weary after His journey, for He has no magnificent coach in which He may ride. As He wearily proceeds, lamentations break upon His ears. Soon the cause of these mournful sounds appears. A dead man is carried out through the gate of the city. He is the only son of his mother, and she is a widow. Her heart is breaking with grief. Her aged form is bent with affliction. Hot tears course down her pale cheeks. There in the coffin lies all her hope, all her consolation. She loved him intensely ; and now that he is dead, every fibre of her heart is interwoven with his in the coffin. She must be a good woman, and her son must have been a good young man ; for she has the sympathy of her acquaintances and neighbors. They feel for her, as people are wont to feel for one who is universally beloved. They compassionate her

sufferings. They commingle their sighs and lamentations with hers. With sad hearts they accompany her on this sorrowful journey ; but just as they pass through the portals of the gate, our Saviour appears in view. His tender heart is touched at the sight, and he bids her weep no more. Approaching the bier, He bade the young man to rise ; and he who was dead sat up and began to speak. Gently did this greatest of benefactors bestow upon the mother her lost child. Verily, in this case, was sorrow turned into joy, and mourning into comfort.

You pity the widow's grief and you rejoice at her good fortune. Your hearts are drawn nearer to Jesus Who gave such proof of His affection for poor suffering humanity. But have you not heard of things more sorrowful ? Nay, have you not seen spectacles more mournful ? There are thousands of them. Had the widow of Naim beheld her beloved child laid to rest in the cold earth, she would know he was in peace as far as the affairs of this life appertained to him. But is this so with every mother. Are there not mothers who have often wished their sons in the grave ? How many a mother, with a heart swelling with grief, has prayed that God would take her erring son ! She loves him, and once he was the source of all her joy. In him all her hopes were centred. He would be the solace of her old age. She would never want, for she would have in him a constant support when the weight of years and infirmities would come upon her. He would close her aged eyes when the hand of death fell heavy upon her. He would kindly lay her to rest alongside of his father. He would pray for her, because he was a faithful boy, full of greatest promise ; but how sadly she is deceived ! Her son, her faithful boy, her unequalled boy, soon

mingles with bad associates. His downward course is at first slow. He remains out late at night. She notes this ; still she loves him so much that she hesitates to reprove him. He grows worse, and instead of comforting her age, he multiplies the silvery locks of care and anxiety. She prays for him, weeps for him, implores him to refrain from bad company. At first he listens. He promises to be good ; but, alas ! he has already imbibed the poisons which will bring her sorrow and himself ruin. Sleepless nights she spends, watching for his return, fearing some misfortune will befall him ; trembling lest in some row he may be wounded or killed. She entreats him to reform, begs of him not to bring disgrace upon himself and her. Tells him of his dead father, and invokes him in the name of the departed to withdraw from the vile resorts in which he squanders his time and his health. But her affectionate words now fall upon a stony heart and leave no impression.

Why does he not heed ? Has he not the nerve of heart and the resolution to say : " So far I have gone, but no farther. I shall avoid this company. I shall regard my mother's tears. I shall be a man " ? But his nervous system is wasted from excessive indulgence. His will is weakened by numerous broken promises. He is a slave. There he lies, prostrated, a slave ! A degraded slave ! His enemies look upon him with contempt. They ridicule him ! Mock him ! They have triumphed ! Their efforts could not have produced better results, and his fall could not have been more loathsome. The mother sees this, and it increases her anguish. Her child debased, ruined, and his enemies exulting. What a sight for a mother's heart to contemplate ! Drinking, gambling, bad company have had their ruinous effects.

Still his wretchedness does not stop here. In his crazy state, he commits some nefarious crime, is dragged before the public gaze and thrown into prison. The news of his crime and imprisonment reaches the ears of his sorrowful mother. Her son in a felon's cell ! His name published far and wide ! His crime upon everyone's lips ! Once her hope, once her pride, now the cause of her unspeakable grief and unnumbered tears. What tongue can describe the anguish which tears her heart ! Those sighs, those sobs, are the most fitting expression of her sorrows.

How often did our Divine Lord touch the young man's conscience. How often did He bid him rise and speak again the words of boyhood, the prayers he had learned, that He might restore him again to the arms of his mother. How often in the stillness of night did this Saviour whisper to him, telling him of his aged mother, of her grief, of her love ; but it was all no use. He commanded the dead to rise, and the coffined dust assumed new life. The planets in their orbs obey His orders. They keep their regular motions. The flowers blossom and exhale their perfumes ; all obey the divine mandate, except man. An intelligent being refuses, and God Himself cannot reform the young man unless that young man consent, unless he co-operate with heavenly grace. God has blessed him with free will, and the Creator must respect His gift.

Do you think this portrait is overdrawn ? Do you hesitate to believe that such misfortunes have befallen any mother or any son ? Do you conclude that all this is an exaggeration ? I am sure, if you only reflect ; or if you only read the daily papers, you will be convinced of the sad truths which I have attempted to depict ; nay, more : I am persuaded that you have been eye-witnesses

of greater calamity. For my part, I know worse. I have known a mother to be dying, and while in the throes of death, inquired about her son—inquired because she feared he was in the clutch of some trouble. I whispered to the attendant not to tell her ; for he was in the neighboring saloon, intoxicated and boisterous in his drunkenness. She dying, her last breath is a sigh for him ! He is so benumbed from dissipation, that he cares not for his mother's dying prayer ! What agony in the moment of death ! What affection on the part of the mother ! What degraded stupidity on the part of the son ! I have known, too, where a mother went to the penitentiary to receive the dead body of her son who was a criminal, and in the Union Depot at Pittsburg met her other son shackled to a sheriff, on his way to the same prison.

It is unnecessary to multiply examples. You all have seen sad human wrecks, with all the miseries they entail. Fortunes squandered. I do not mean pecuniary fortunes, but fortunes more valuable. Fortunes of intellect, fortunes of heart, fortunes of parental affection, fortunes of opportunity ! Alas, what stupendous loss ! And what gain ? A criminal garb in a state prison, a photograph in Rogues' Gallery ! Marked as if he were another Cain. Shamed by men. Ah, what a lesson for young men, yea, for old men, too ! With what zeal they should avoid bad company ! How they should fortify themselves with the safeguards of religion, that they may not plunder themselves of the grace and intellectual gifts bestowed upon them by their God.

With what unremitting vigilance should parents, therefore, watch over their children ! What good examples should be furnished them ! How they should be trained to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to

say their prayers morning and night, to receive frequently the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. After these, give them a few good books to read. Many, if you can afford it. These are good companions. These will never betray them. These will be anchors holding them from vicious associates. From these they will imbibe new, elevating ideas. In these they will hold converse with exalted minds. By these they will be moulded to meet life successfully, honorably, and courageously. Instead of becoming a scourge to their parents, instead of being a scandal to others and disgrace to themselves, they will be the pride of their parents, the true supporters of society, honorable citizens, and faithful children of the Church !

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTERPENTECOST.

They were watching Him. (Luke xiv.—1.)

My Dear Friends: Our Divine Lord is the great Instructor. He takes every opportunity to teach humanity. Now He employs certain methods, again He will use different ones; but all aiming at the same object—the instruction of mankind. At the time to which the Sacred Scriptures this morning refer, you see Him visit a prince of the Pharisees. They are undoubtedly, so far as appearances go, delighted by His visit. They show many marks of respect. They are all attention. Probably they attempt to flatter Him. All this time they are disguising their real purpose. They wish to know whether He will heal on the Sabbath. If He do, then He cannot be a true prophet, for prophets do not violate the sacred law of God by a desecration of the Lord's day. A man afflicted by the dropsy stands before our Saviour. He knows, too, that it is the Sabbath, but like most people afflicted by disease, he longs to be well, and is entirely content to be healed on the Sabbath, though some hypocrites may think that an act of divine clemency in his favor would be a violation of God's commandment, and so they watch Him. They are fault-finders. They are desirous to seize the slightest

pretext to underrate His charity and challenge His authority. By an act of divine mercy, the man is cured. They are witnesses of this miracle, but say nothing, although they think much. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, answered: "*Which of you would have an ox or an ass fall into a pit on the Lord's day, and would not try to save him?*" You observe that there are two lessons taught by this miracle. First, acts of charity are always in season ; and second, do not censure in others the things you would do yourselves ;—in other words, do not mask your hypocrisy by a sanctimonious exterior.

Now I would say to you : watch your Divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Not for the purpose of finding fault, or questioning His goodness, but to imitate His heavenly virtues. Learn of Him to ascend toward perfection. "*Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*" This is the Christian life. This it is which lifts you above the strife and turmoil of earthly things, which directs your ambition toward your great Teacher and Model, Jesus Christ. It is customary for persons who desire to ascend to success, to study the requisites necessary for such advancement. They must ponder well the principles which constitute the tide which bears others on to prosperity. If they would succeed, they must have models after which they fashion their lives. If a person desires wealth, he studies the life of some one who has acquired a great fortune. All his business principles are thoroughly examined. Everything which conduced to his prosperity is carefully weighed. Nothing is left to chance. Thus the man ambitious for riches shapes his conduct after his chosen model. A student who aims to attain to a high degree of eloquence, has his model. He studies the illustrious

orators of ancient and modern times. Every sentence is analyzed. Every thought considered. All his penetration, long years of toil, are employed to find out the secret of their powers, to learn where the magic of their power resides—that power which swayed the intellects of thousands, that genius which has made their eloquence imperishable. In a similiar way does the painter who paints for immortality, toil. He visits the birth-places of famous artists ; he critically examines those painters whose productions have rendered them famous. He endeavors to detect that master-touch which gives such life to the canvass. He absorbs, as far as he is able, these models, these grand conceptions of rare genius. Nor is the man of humbler pretensions exempt, if he purposes to succeed. The farmer, too, must have his model. He must observe what successful farmers have done ; what it is which have rendered them notable for their prosperity. Every successful person is necessitated to learn from the experience of others. In a word, he must have a model. What, then, is the model for a Catholic ? For a Catholic who wishes to attain to Christian perfection ? Is it not Jesus, his great Instructor ? A Christian life should arise transcendently above the sordid themes of earth. His conduct should be the mirror of his soul, the reflector of those great virtues which emanate from his Lord and Model.

If one desires to be a successful farmer, he ought to be a practical Christian ; for it is from his great Model that blessing comes which crowns his toil with an abundant harvest. If one desires to be an illustrious orator, Jesus should be his model. To a distinguished orator, great virtue is necessary. His soul must be permeated with all the exalted virtues. He must be imbued with

a true sense of justice. The cry of suffering humanity must awaken the loftiest emotions of equity. His soul must vibrate with love for others, a hatred for oppression, indignation at wrong, and abhorrence for bribery. He must be the defender of the weak, the scourge of defrauders, the promoter of morality. He must be moulded by the hands of virtue. He must be an honest man, an honorable man, a Christian man. It is these qualities which give vivacity and vigor to his words ; it is these which impress the seal of genius upon his eloquence. Where will we find these exalted virtues ? Who will be his model ? Need I tell you it is Jesus, the Preceptor of the human race ? Does an artist aspire to celebrity ? Does he long to rival those celebrated masters whose extraordinary skill is the admiration of the world, whose works are as everlasting as the human race on earth ? Then Jesus must be his model. From Him he must draw his inspiration. Those renowned masters were religious men. Who but a devout Catholic could produce that matchless painting from the brush of Titian, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. That glorious work which reflects the virtue and the genius of that wonderful painter, could not be produced by an irreligious man ; that grand, that pure conception could only be born in the soul of a man as remarkable for his piety as for the grandeur of his ideal. What absorbing thoughts ! How exalted must have been his heart to conceive such a marvel of purity ! He seems to have lived in heaven, to have basked in the very bosom of his divine Model from Whom he drank his inspiration. Those great Catholic artists were frequent communicants. They lived in a spirit of sanctity. In order that their productions would breath forth spirituality, they were pure themselves. It was this

that gave the touch of genius to their paintings. It was this that has made them immortal.

Thus it is, my Christian friends,—thus it is in every sphere of life ; Jesus should be your Model. You will lose nothing by it, but gain much. Watch your eternal Model. Pattern your life after His. Do you desire to be prudent, then learn of Him Who so aptly replied to His enemies : “ *Whose image and superscription is this ? It is Cæsar’s. Then render to Cæsar the things that belong to Cæsar, and to God the things that belong to God.*” Do you want to be wise ? Then behold your Model at the age of twelve years, disputing with the doctors in the synagogue at Jerusalem. Would you be industrious ? Observe how studious Jesus was. Would you cultivate patience ? Note His inexhaustible patience. Do your former friends give you a cold shoulder, even ridicule you ? Be patient, and look at Jesus scourged at the pillar and crowned with thorns in derision. Have you suffered the rebuffs of ill-fortune, or does adversity still hover, with his dismal mantel, over you ? Is the last glimmer of your star of hope setting in the murky storms of despair,—behold your Model nailed to the cross ! With extended arms He welcomes you. The drops of sacred blood trickling from His wounds, tell you of His love. He is your hope. You will never perish in despair while you keep Him as your Model. Do you find it hard to forgive your enemies ? Then listen to your Model dying at the hands of His torturers,—“ *Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.*”

Imitate Him. Surely He is deserving of you. To be a true follower of Christ is indeed the sincere Christian’s glory. How many have imitated Him, and are now in heaven. They abandoned the so-called

pleasure of this transitory life. They could see no happiness without Him. They drew their inspiration from Him. Among His imitators are found the greatest scholars, the most celebrated masters in science, literature, and art. The saints and martyrs were His followers, while His blessed Mother reflected His glory and His divinity. Imitate Jesus, then, I beseech you ; let Him be your great Model. From Him learn the noblest lesson in life, namely, the act of living and dying in His friendship. You will be the happier, the more contented, the more successful for your imitation. Watch Him ; watch Him, not as the Jews did ; but watch Him to imitate Him, to rise to Him, and to pattern your every act according to these examples which He gave you.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

And the second is like to this : thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. (St. Math. xxii.—39.)

My Dear Friends : These words were spoken by no less a person than the Son of God. They are transmitted to us by the inspired writer, St. Matthew, and taught by our holy Church. Having such authority, they are deserving of your serious attention. Repeatedly you have listened to sermons upon those two great commandments, from which dependeth the law and the prophets : “ *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*” But have you drawn useful lessons from them ? Have you modeled your lives according to these precepts so vast in importance and so beneficial to all ?

It is not my purpose, however, upon this occasion, to dwell directly upon these commandments, but to direct your attention to an inference which is suggested by them. “ *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*” Now, allow me to ask : do you love yourselves ? You will of course protect yourself from many dangers and provide for many of your wants. But still I continue to inquire : do you really love yourselves ? You will

hug yourselves with the delusive assurance that you love yourselves. Each one of you will answer : " I not to love myself ? Why, it is preposterous to ask such a question ! To be sure I love myself ! Do not my actions demonstrate this, if indeed a demonstration is needed ? I not to love myself ? Why, such a question is silly." I wish you did love yourselves : for if you did, you would certainly love your neighbor and your God. The fact that you are at times deficient in your love toward God and your neighbor, is proof enough that you are not perfect in your love toward yourselves ; and this I shall endeavor to prove.

Is not the thief good to himself ? Does he not love himself ? It appears that he does ; for he is anxious to appropriate things belonging to others to himself. He wants to provide himself with plenty. Though he loves not his neighbor, it seems he certainly loves himself. But this is a sophistry. He does not love himself. The way of the transgressor is hard. He does not study the consequences ; or, if he does, the study prevents him not from stealing. He is finally imprisoned and disgraced. He did not love himself, for had he, prison bars would never have closed upon him. Had he loved himself, he would have been industrious in the walks of honesty, and this industry would have moulded him to honor and fidelity. He did not love himself, nor his neighbor, nor his God, and punishment is his remuneration.

Here is a person who pursues fortune with a vengeance. He is bound to get riches. His ambition is gold. He exhausts his mental and physical powers in accumulating wealth. He cares not whether his neighbors are doomed to penury on earth and to everlasting perdition in hell, if he only succeed. He builds his fortune upon the ruins

of others. He wishes their failure, that thereby his purse may develop. He flatters himself that he loves himself ; that he will become influential ; that people will look up to him as though he were a lord. He will be great. But this greatness he will never enjoy. He cannot enjoy it. He is destroying all the sources whence true enjoyment springs. He is banishing from his heart those emotions which fertilize the soul and make worldly possessions enjoyable. In their stead he is cultivating nigardliness as well as covetousness. Did he love himself, he would be rational. He would say to himself : " I shall labor honestly, but not with extreme selfishness. For if I amass a large fortune, it may be the ruin, rather than the betterment, of my family. I shall be moderate, and my moderation will be an example worthy of their imitation. Neither they nor I shall have the curse of the widow or the orphan or the wronged." But he acts not thus, because he loves not himself ; and his reward will be sorrowful disappointment. His harvest will bring him little joy, for he transgresses the great commandments of the law and the prophets.

Another worries because he does not become rich faster, and he worries, too, because his neighbor acquires wealth faster than he does. This is foolishness. He stewes himself away, fretting while he should be better employed. He gains nothing. His worriments multiply. He is injuring his health, and it is quite evident he does not love himself. Did he love himself, he would have a broader soul. He might toil to prosper, but he would bid Godspeed to every one else. He would have less worry and more contentment.

Again, you might have seen a man, an honest man, a man who injures no person and wishes well to all. Ex-

cessive labor is his occupation. The day is too short for him. The burning sun is not too hot, nor the frost of winter too severe. Work—work is his only pleasure. You may admire such a man, but he does not love himself. His unremitting toil will break down his health. Instead of ease in his old age, he will suffer from disease. The doctors will get his hard earned cash. Often he will regret that he did not love himself more. He was unwise, and though he meant to be honest, he was dishonest to himself. Moderation should have been his maxim. God gave him health, but he abused it. The gift was not appreciated until it was squandered. Then its true worth was apparent, but it was too late.

You will now acknowledge, I think, that many there are who do not love themselves. Nay, more ; I shall convince you that many not only do not love themselves, but hate themselves. Yea, hate themselves, and not only themselves, but their progeny also. You need not be told of the appalling number of sins committed in our age against chastity and temperance. These monstrous transgressions occur even in our own neighborhood. Virtue is laughed at as though it were folly to be chaste and temperate. Do you tell me that those prevaricators love themselves ? You could not be so untruthful. I see a man staggering along the side-walk ; he reels—falls into the gutter. There he lies, muttering nonsense to himself, and besmeared with filth. Do you tell me that man loves himself ? Well, I hope your love for yourselves will not be of that sort. I hear of a man maddened with excessive drink, going in amidst his little family, taking down his gun to shoot his wife. Does he love himself ? Does he love his family ? Some day, in his madness, he may perpetrate the crime which he has threatened. He does not love himself. He is

ruining himself, destroying his nervous system. He will transmit this degraded, exhausted nature to his children—an awful legacy; the only inheritance of a depraved father. Tell me not that he loves himself. Such a man hates himself, hates his offspring; for if he loved himself and loved his child, his behavior would be vastly different. Look at the murders and suicides which have been committed almost in your midst. What was the cause? Excessive drink, and probably impurity. These are the crimes which are prevalent in our day; and when some people desire what they call a good time, they go off to some distant town or city, and there indulge in revolting sins, where neighbors will not hear of their profligacy. Are these the persons who are to be the parents of the coming generation? If so, their children will curse them. When they have grown old, or probably in their graves, these children will be punished for crimes, the propensity to which they have inherited from these very parents. They will suffer from mental and physical defects, the pernicious legacy of their sinful parents.

Do you think I am airing some nonsensical theory which has no foundation in fact? Read statistics. Do you think society was always so? The same source of information will prove to you that crime is increasing faster in proportion than the population. That lawlessness has existed more or less at all times, no one will deny; but our age is notoriously pre-eminent for lust and drunkenness, for murder and suicide and dishonesty. Do these violaters of God's law love themselves? Behold their wretched existence and their more wretched death! Do they love their children? Behold the foundlings, a large proportion of which die before they have reached the age of twelve years;

and the majority of those who survive, either enter aens of iniquity or pursue a disreputable life of some other sort ! Alas ! what a terrible account must such parents give to the Eternal Judge for the sinful proclivities which they bestow upon their offspring ! By excesses the parents have impoverished their whole nervous system ; the brain is diseased, the body ruined, and this deformity is often the only dowry which a child receives from his sinful parents. If this wicked mode of living continue, what will the human race be in a few generations ? If this generation has multiplied its crimes, what will the next and the next be ? An awful thought ! A deplorable subject for calm consideration !

What is the origin of all this sinful disorder ? It is needless to reply that the origin is found in man's want of love for himself. Did he love himself, he would know that the greatest benefits arise from the love of God ; and knowing this incontrovertible truth, his highest ambition would be to love God, and consequently his neighbor. He would know that, if there be any happiness in this world, it is the virtuous person who enjoys that happiness. If he were so selfish as not to love God for Himself, he would love Him because from such love springs so many blessings, so much good for himself and to his children.

But you, my Christian friends, should love God in preference to yourselves, in preference to everything else. Your love for Him should constantly burn. It should be more faithful than the sanctuary lamp which burns in honor of its Creator, for this lamp is sometimes extinguished ; but your love ought to be ceaseless. Then, indeed, you would love yourselves, and find little difficulty in loving your neighbor. Your fidelity to

God would protect you from many of the wicked disasters of this life, and secure for you an eternal reward, not of punishment, but of glory.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Son, be of good heart : thy sins are forgiven thee. (St. Math. ix.—2.)

My Dear Friends : Our Divine Lord knew the frailty of man. He knew he would transgress the divine law. But He loved the human race ; and this love is attested by His death upon the cross, and by the institution of the Sacrament of Penance. "Man is weak," He seems to say to Himself ; "he will fall, but I shall give him the means to rise again. He will at times forget My love for him ; he will forget the sacrifices I make for him ; Satan will triumph ; but I shall not let man be a captive. I shall, as of old, establish for him an ark of refuge." He consequently institutes the sacred tribunal of Penance, to which the sinner may go for security. Here every sin is pardoned. All the eternal punishment is cancelled. The sinner is once more a free man. The only conditions required, are that he be truly sorry for his sins, resolve never again to violate the law of God, and confess his sins to a duly authorized priest of the Church of God.

Some who are not Catholics, maintain it is absurd to admit that man has the power to forgive sins. So did the Scribes ; for they clamored that Jesus had blas-

phemed, as you have just heard from the inspired records of that memorable event. But man does not claim to have this power inherent in himself. It is delegated to him by the Author of all power. Does God directly light the earth? Oh, no. How then? By a material instrument—the sun. He gave to the centre of the solar system the qualities of illumination, and from there the rays of light are diffused throughout our planetary system. He employs, therefore, in the physical world a material instrument of His power. Can He not do likewise in the world of human society? Who will set the limits of His power? Or who will dictate to Him what He must do? He decrees that certain persons, priests of His Church, will have power to light the soul of man and to dispel the darkness of sin, and who will say to Him nay? He is the Dispenser of all power. The slander of the Scribes or the cant of unbelievers neither can restrain His love nor annul His decrees.

It is not, however, my intention to-day to enter into a theological disquisition on the Sacrament of Penance, but to awaken in your souls a true appreciation for this beneficent favor, that you may acknowledge the mercy of God and apply to your souls the merits of Christ's sufferings.

Where is the Catholic who does not with a grateful heart thank God for so great a blessing? Where is the Catholic who has not felt the soothing influence of this benign sacrament? In the anguish of his heart he approached the holy tribunal. He departed with a light heart and a tranquillized conscience. With what ardent love should every Catholic kneel to thank his Redeemer and Preserver! In the silence of his heart he pours out his soul in thanksgiving to his constant Benefactor.

How many a heart has found tranquillity in confession? How many a shipwrecked soul has found here a calm harbor? What would Catholics do but for this sacrament? Baptism would be inefficacious to many. Numbers are contaminated by the leprosy of mortal sin. Where would they go for solace? There would be none. Burdened with the disease of some mortal sin, they would live and die. No guaranty that their sins were ever pardoned. How miserable, how dejected would they live! On their death-bed, the pains of sickness would be augmented by the torments of a guilty conscience. No priest to assure them that their sins were forgiven and that the voice of their repentance had penetrated the merciful heart of Jesus: that His sacred blood had purified their afflicted souls. Now how different. A man is taken down with sudden sickness. He sends for a priest. His great anxiety is to have a priest. It is not for a doctor he cries. It is not his bodily sufferings which alarm him. Oh, no. He might not have been a great sinner, but nevertheless he wants a priest. A priest arrives. The sick person breathes a sigh of relief. He confesses his sins, promises if God spare his life, to atone for his transgressions. The priest bends over him, pronounces the sacred words of absolution, and in the place of his Divine Maker says: "*Be of good heart, My son, thy sins are forgiven thee.*" What tranquillity follows! Who can estimate the wonderful works of God in this Sacrament of Reconciliation? Here the unbeliever, were he present, would acknowledge the marvellous efficacy of God's grace; here are seen evidences of God's mercy; here are proofs that His words were not spoken in vain when He empowered the Apostles to forgive sins: "*Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall*

retain they are retained." Here, too, are evidences that this power still abides in the Church of God.

The confessional is the great barrier to sin, the spiritual physician of society, the ark of refuge, the regenerator of the social fabric. Society is wicked enough ; but what would it be but for the confessional ! Who would set limits to sin ? Who could retard its cancerous growth ? None. The civil laws are not competent to restrain it. They have not, for crime is multiplying. They cannot say to the conscience, be pure. They point not to God. They awaken no grand ideal. Their penalty is temporal punishment, and this holds not the "wretch in order." The Sacrament of Penance, coming from God, having divine power, is alone capable to drive back sin, the deadly foe of mankind ; sin which brings so much distress ; sin which disturbs the tranquillity of the soul, which produces so many disorders in parishes ; sin which fills the jails and penitentiaries and erects our scaffolds ; sin which robs the soul, devastates the heart, and condemns to everlasting torments the transgressors,—is conquered only by divine power in the Sacrament of Penance !

Our Lord is still the Good Shepherd ; He still goes after the sinner and kindly brings him back. No doubt you have often observed a devout child. He receives the sacraments regularly and often. With clasped hands he breathes the holy innocence of his heart in gratitude to God. His soul is fertilized with every Christian virtue. How buoyant is his heart ! How holy his aspirations ! How noble his behavior ! He is truly a Catholic child ! Edifying to all and beloved by idolizing parents. He remains faithful to God until he is eighteen or twenty years of age ; but he has been gradually forming bad associations. Slowly

He leaves the path of true joy. Bad company is drawing him away. Repeatedly he looks back at the path from which he is departing ; but passions burn in his breast while his environments heap on new fuel. The world with its false, decoying allurements, entices him onward. He goes less frequently to confession. Slowly every silken thread mooring him to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is severed. He falls into mortal sin, becomes reckless, and not seldom dissipated. His, indeed, is an awful fall. Jesus mourns his spiritual death, and his parents are distracted. But our Saviour permits him to go on until he has drank from the stagnating pools of sin. He is satiated, disgusted, disappointed. The fascinations of sin proved to be only snares. The pleasures thereof only illusions. The joys, vexations ; and the reward, decay. The soul once luxuriant, is impoverished. Amidst this devastation there is not a single Christian virtue remaining—all is a total waste, complete spiritual ruin. His benign Redeemer whispers to his conscience. He pauses, looks back, thinks of the time when he was truly happy—when his young heart was unburdened with vice. His very soul weeps over its great loss ; but though desolate, he is not forgotten ; His Saviour speaks gently to him : “ Son, be of good cheer, I have not abandoned you. I have not forgotten those holy hours when you knelt before My altar in prayer ; when your young soul worshipped Me so ardently ; when you loved Me with your whole heart and aspired only to Me. I shall not remember your transgressions,—they have given you enough of pain. Come, put your hand into the wound in My side ; feel these wounds in My hands—these are expressions of My love for you ; they tell you that you were never forsaken by Me. Come, show yourself again to your priest and

My priest ; your sins will be pardoned ; none will listen but your confessor and Myself. Again these wounds will bleed for you and wash away your sins." The sinner's heart yields ; his soul bursts through the confines of sin ! The light of God's grace shines upon the barren waste ! The mercy of His Saviour has conquered ! The sinner is again redeemed ! His parents, his friends, yea, heaven rejoices as he leaves the confessional once more a free man. He is not the same innocent child he was when he first went in pursuit of sinful pleasure ; still his sins are cancelled, and he may attain to greater Christian virtue than he ever possessed.

Without this sacrament, how many would dare to approach Holy Communion? A few may have preserved baptismal innocence, but the vast majority have disrobed themselves of such purity. Behold the economy of your Saviour in establishing means for your regeneration ! He loves you ; He desires to live in your hearts, but sin debars him. Where sin is, He cannot dwell—hence the Sacrament of Penance. And you may judge a Catholic quite prudently by his frequency or delinquency in the reception of this sacrament. When a Catholic goes not to confession ; when he tells you he is not yet prepared—you may look out for him. For my part, I would not trust him ; there is something wrong, something grievously wrong in him.

Should not, therefore, every Catholic thank God for giving him such a means of reconciliation and grace ? Ought we not, with our whole heart, with our whole soul, and with all our strength, render our gratitude to Him ? With fervent prayer we should thank him that we are Catholics, and can consequently avail ourselves of the works of His mercy. Pray often that Catholics who have abused this sacrament, who never go to con-

fession, may repent of their follies and be converted ; and for yourselves, do not insult Almighty God ; never, by your indifference, abuse His favors. Prize this remarkable proof of His beneficence toward you. We beg of you, O most Merciful Saviour, to teach us to appreciate truly your benign compassion in the Sacrament of Penance ; we implore assistance that we may never make a bad confession ; we entreat You to bless us at the end of life with an opportunity to confess our sins ; and as the priest pronounces the words of absolution, may You, O benign Redeemer, whisper to our poor agitated souls : “ *Be of good heart, son : thy sins are forgiven thee !* ”

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

The kingdom of heaven is like to a man being a king, who made a marriage for his son. (St. Math. xxii.— 2.)

My Dear Friends : Our Divine Lord tells us in these words, of the marriage feast which His Eternal Father made for the human race. It was an illustrious feast, though involving a direful tragedy. It was the assuming of a human body and a human soul by Jesus Himself ; and the appalling tragedy was His death upon the Cross. The invitation had been extended through the Prophets of old, and also the Divine Son called them. The Jews were incredulous or disinterested. They refused the invitation. Many of the King's servants having been insulted, were put to death, and even the King's Son was not spared. The King was angry. He destroyed the murderers, and burned their city ;—the famous city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the conqueror, and countless Jews perished during the siege of this renowned metropolis.

The Jews had forsaken the ways of Almighty God. They were indifferent, as many Christians are in our day. They sought for earthly things. They were blind to their true interests. Consequently they had no relish for the supernatural, nor any illuminated patience to

weigh the doctrines of the Messiah. They ignored His invitation and rejected His teachings. The servants, however, persevered in fulfilling the orders of their Master. From the byways and the thoroughfares, from the nooks and remote parts, they induced the Gentiles to enter the festive halls. All those who accepted the invitation had faith in Jesus—otherwise they would be debarred from entrance; but all had not on the wedding garment of charity, justice, and innocence. This class, deficient in the requisites for a true Christian, is represented in the Sacred Scriptures by one person. He is punished for neglecting the virtues which should be the ornaments and glory of every Catholic.

Jesus is the Son of the King Who prepared the marriage feast for mankind. From the foundation of the world He had made arrangements for this feast. The Blessed Virgin was predestined. Her pure soul untainted by sin, and her chaste body animated by sublimest gifts, were prepared to be the receptacle of the incarnated God. The time came for the marriage, and the announcement was made. What a sanctifying marriage! The marriage of Jesus to His spotless Church! The marriage of Jesus to every willing heart! A sacred union in which we are mystically united with the Son of Mary, the Saviour of the world.

The servants went forth to invite all to this nuptial gathering. The Apostles and their delegates went into every thoroughfare, into every lane, every nook, and exhorted, admonished, entreated, that all may partake of the banquet. Many resisted stubbornly; but the servants of Christ diligently labored. Burning with zeal, no danger was so appalling, no risk of life too dangerous, to retard them. After excessive toil, after untold sacrifices, they triumphed. People listened, and

were converted—were induced to accept the invitation. The Rome of the Cæsars became the Rome of Christianity. Athens, the home of philosophy, embraced the teachings of the Child of Nazareth. Pagan erudition bowed before the science of the Gospel. When once convinced, they accepted the invitation, and by means of divine grace were united to Jesus and His Church.

There were some of those also who had not on the wedding garment. They had faith, still they did not conform to the laws which this faith enjoined. These had not charity, nor that piety which decorates the soul of a true Christian. In every age and nation many of this kind were to be found in the Church of God. Instead of moulding the character of others by good example, they destroyed some, and prevented others, from becoming guests at the feast. While they professed faith in the Redeemer, they assaulted His doctrines or disobeyed His mandates. They knelt before the altar only to disguise their criminality. The better to succeed, they assumed the gravity of an anchorite, and blushed not at their vicious successes. They wore without detection the mask of hypocrisy, until the Master's patience was exhausted; then they were cast out into exterior darkness. Whatever may be the condition of a bad Catholic beyond the grave, he surely suffers here from the darkness into which he falls by an unchristian life. He is enveloped; nay, more, he is permeated by darkness. Darkness settles upon him—darkness in his intellect, darkness in his heart, darkness in every fibre of his being. Without the friendship of God, the soul must indeed be dark and its vision obscured. It has lost its polar star. The result is confusion and disorder. The mantle of protection has fallen from his shoulders;—he is an outcast. It may

be he still retains an air of superiority, but the light of his intellect is extinguished. There is one way by which he can avoid eternal shipwreck, and that is by returning to his Church, kneeling at the feet of Jesus, and with tears of repentance ask Him for the wedding garment of innocence.

Now, as you are aware, the Catholic Church is the spouse of Jesus. The union existing between Jesus and His Church will never be severed as long as time endures. There will be no divorce, no separation. She has continued for nineteen centuries to invite multitudes to the feast prepared by her divine Bridegroom and His Eternal Father ; she will continue to do so as age after age sinks into the abyss of time. Many have heeded the invitation ; many have rejected her proposal. Some, there are, who belong to her, but they are wayward, headstrong, sinful. They persist in wearing the garment of hell, though they understand this is not the garb of a devout Catholic. They are wise in their conceits, but their conceits are repugnant to morality and religion. The day will come when the Master will visit them. They may not hear his voice as He reprimands them ; but the punishment which they will suffer will be evidence of His visitation. Often had He spoken to their hearts ; often had He, in the person of His ministers, bade them reflect on the text which I have read to you. He has remonstrated with them in something of this manner : “ Do you imagine that drunkards will be allowed to enter My eternal festive halls ? Do you think I shall tolerate the presence of the adulterer, the fornicator, the oppressor of the poor, the tyrant, or the subject tearing down legitimate government ? Do you think I shall show mercy to those who had no mercy, or who

derided My justice ? No ; you must cast off the mantle of iniquity and put on the robes of innocence, if you desire to be a guest at My feast."

Some commentators hold that the kingdom of God mentioned in to day's Gospel, may be considered the Church militant on earth. The marriage feast also represents the Church, into which all are invited ; but many refused, among them the Jews. Catholics who have not lost all faith, though they are vile, may remain therein until the Bridegroom comes to examine the guests, until they are to render an account of their behavior during life. Then, indeed, those who are not suitably attired, will be handed over to the torturer. Whatever difference of opinion may be fostered by scholars, it is evident that in the Catholic Church Jesus has prepared a great feast. He not only invites, but solicits everyone to participate in this feast. One thing is necessary ; it is that every guest must have on the wedding garment of purity. The feast ? It is the Holy Eucharist. In this great Banquet Jesus is united to the human recipient. A wonderful marriage ! Divinity and humanity communicate with each other ! Soul speaks to soul. The finite is the festive hall for the reception of the infinite ! The Divine humiliates Himself ; the creature is exalted ! Pledges of friendship are given. Jesus is to be henceforth the Bridegroom of the soul. The soul will ever remain robed in purity. It will never again be tainted by sin, nor lack any good essential to its happiness. Ah, if such a union could always continue, how happy poor mortals would be ! It does not endure. Why ? Because of the perversity of our intentions. Mortal sin only can break the bonds of friendship ; and some Catholics hesitate not to rend asunder the golden strands of grace.

A pity it is that they are so blunted by bad company and its concomitant sins. How often the Church invites them, beseeches them, exhorts and encourages them to quit the haunts of immorality. How reckless they are in obeying the voice of the Church! Catholics living almost under the eaves of their Church, will not hear Mass on Sunday, though they understand the nature of the sacrifice offered. How un-Catholic is their own conduct? How deaf to their own interests, material and sacred? They will lounge in a saloon on Sunday, drinking and becoming drunk. Pagans could not presume to insult God more. Those weigh the sanctity of the Church and the sublime sacrifice with their beastly enjoyment, and, wonder of wonders! they prefer degradation to sacredness. Great God! if they are not ashamed of their excesses, why do they not lament the cost of them?—the cost in money, the cost in the ruin of their family and themselves, the cost in the expulsion of the friendship of God?

Avoid those indulgences which have ruin for their reward. Set a good example to others. You may be, you can be, a life boat to many a poor human wreck. Be brave in the rescue of others. If you save only one, you will certainly not be lost yourself. Ask God to give you the will and the way. On your death-bed, if you are conscious that you have introduced one with the wedding garment into the feast of Christ, your suffering will thereby be mitigated, your joy augmented, and your hope secured

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. (St. John iv.—48.)

My Dear Friends : Our Divine Saviour reproves the ruler for his want of sufficient faith. "*Unless you see signs and wonders,*" says Our Lord to him, "*you will not believe.*" Continuing, Jesus said : "*Go thy way, thy son liveth.*" The ruler believes His word ; but his faith is imperfect until he learns from his servants that the fever left him at the hour the Eternal Physician pronounced the words, "*Thy son liveth.*" Then himself and his whole household were confirmed in faith.

This miracle teaches all mankind in every age, a salutary lesson. It convinced the ruler of our Divine Master's power. It tells us in all our miseries to look to heaven for comfort and relief. We should have confidence in God, and believe the doctrine imparted to us by Him and the Church which He established. Our unfaltering faith is pleasing to him and beneficial to us. The desire to see signs and wonders, is significant of lack of faith. It is the absence of an unwavering trust in the God of mercy and goodness. "*He who loves Me will keep My commandments,*" He says. Such a person will not be looking for wonders to convince him. He

believes; it is sufficient for him that God has spoken. If he does delve into the secrets of Nature, it is only to find out the marvellous works of God, so that the Eternal Architect may be more honored and glorified by His people.

To how many, in our day, could the reproach administered by our Saviour be applied ! People are forgetful of God. Their ambition is to excel in commerce, in politics, in wealth—in anything except that for which they were chiefly created. In the fever of their efforts, they burn for worldly advantages. They are consumed with the desire to obtain the perishable. They stand in need of the heavenly Physician to touch their hearts, to cool their burning thirst, and bid them look above for true happiness. Engrossed with the objects of their ambition, they strain every nerve to grasp the tempting fruit of earthly renown. Sight of the noble ends of life is lost. Prosperity only gives rise to doubt in the existence of God. There are not signs and wonders to prove to them that Providence still directs the universe. In order to attain to popularity, some may even seek large audiences for the purpose of condemning the works of God or denying His existence. The fault with these, if they are sincere, is that unprejudiced search is not made by them for the wonders of God. The heavens and the earth abound with such marvels. "*How great are thy works, O Lord ! Thou hast made all things in wisdom ; the earth is filled with Thy riches.*" These words of the Psalmist are verified by every student of Nature.

We would say to them : look around you ; study honestly the wonders which God places before you for your contemplation. The marvellous things which you will behold are signs of God and His providence. The con-

sideration of the wonderful operations of Nature will give a healthy tone to your thought ; will lift you above yourself ; will subdue the fever's rage for wealth, for power or position. Take a rose. You have enjoyed its delightful perfume. Its delicate tints have no doubt won your admiration. Yea, its very presence may have expanded the heart, allayed sorrow, and given a peaceful buoyance to your entire being. But study its perfume. Why does it differ from other vegetation? Whence does it get this pleasing fragrance? How distilled? Why do the sepals possess such soft tints fading from one delicate color into another. You may answer that it is due to cultivation. But even granting this, what is there in the rose predisposing it to culture. Is this delicacy of odor and color, earth? Is it air? Can you combine both so as to produce the same effects? You cannot, for the God of Nature has endowed the rose with a laboratory whose work surpasses the skill of man. Well has Our Lord said, that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like the lily of the field. But whence does the rose obtain such a prodigious faculty? Does it receive it from the soil in which it grows? Does it imbibe it from the atmosphere? The answer is no; for, analyze the elements, and you will find that they do not possess it, and consequently cannot impart what they have not. Nature, you may say, is the author; let me ask: did you ever see Nature? Did you ever apprehend her by any of your senses? Is she an eternal something? Is she infinity in her capabilities; boundless in her extension; possessing matchless intelligence, and directress and preservatrix of the universe. If you say she is, then you only call by another name the Supreme Being Whom Catholics adore as God. Should you maintain that Nature is a

force, then we ask, is it an intelligent force? If you deny to it intelligence, you hold that an unintelligent something governs the universe, and of course human intelligence also. Such a position could be held by no man of sound mind. For no being can impart what he has not; but here an unintelligent nature would be giving to man intelligence—something which, according to the hypothesis, Nature does not possess.

But the unbeliever in God may claim that Nature is intelligent. A statement of this kind involves him in a labyrinth of difficulties. Without analyzing the assertion, let us inquire: Did you ever see, feel, smell, or taste an intelligence? You did not; and as you have not, why attribute intelligence to the force called Nature. But should we grant that Nature does possess intelligence, then the question arises, did it always possess intelligence? If not, then it must have received it from another source; if it always possessed intelligence, then its intelligence is eternal, and therefore God.

But enough of this. Consider the works of God in a general way, and what wonders you behold! See the grass which you trample under feet. Who can explain the nature of its growth? We look upon it as insignificant; but how mysterious is its formation! The shrubs, the trees—all vegetation proclaims the wisdom of God. If our minds soar to the stars, here again is a magnificent display of the Eternal Designer's power manifested. Lost in thought, we study the motions of the ponderous globes which illumine the beautiful expanse of the heavens. Pondering upon their position and the forces by which they are controlled, we exclaim: Great are thy works, O God! The heavens and the earth are proofs of Thy greatness. Did man

study himself, he would behold the greatest and grandest wonder of all visible creation. Man, so wonderful in organism, so incomprehensible in the faculties of his soul, is argument sufficient to demonstrate the existence of the Supreme Intelligence.

Well directed study leads to God ; but prayer consoles the heart, nourishes the soul, and unites us with our Maker. A Catholic may examine, weigh, reflect, and speculate upon mysteries natural and supernatural ; still after the mental excursions are over, he should rest in the same secure faith which was the characteristic mark of all celebrated Catholic writers. As a hunter returns home after the chase to warm himself at his own hearth and be protected under his own roof from the storms of the night ; so the student should, after his speculations, be warmed by divine hope and protected from the storms of doubt and difficulties by an ardent faith. It is only when the scholar is shielded by the armor of faith that he can make the most beneficial investigation in the realms of hidden knowledge. For now he can advance with security. He tosses aside all doubts in matters of faith. What discoveries he makes, involve no contradiction ; therefore they at once become a part of the sum of human science. Such was the method of the renowned Doctors of the Church. They saw the wisdom and power of God manifested in all His works.

Bacon has said : " A little philosophy makes unbelievers, but much philosophy makes Christians." The more we analyze Nature, the more our soul arises to its Creator. Our gratitude becomes greater, our love increases with our gratitude, until we bow in heartfelt prayer, thanking Him for all His blessings. We should implore God that He may give us still greater powers

of intellect for the purpose of better knowing His marvellous works, and a heart to appreciate them. As the poet says, "An honest man is the noblest work of God," therefore every Catholic ought to labor that his life may correspond to the teaching of the Church. If it does not, then he is diseased. There is no true spiritual health where moral defects exist. Health of the body is to be desired. Indeed, we make every effort to regain it, if it be impaired. But the health of the soul is of incomparably greater importance. Our Divine Lord said to the ruler, *Thy son liveth* ; but to restore health to the soul, He died upon the Cross. What is more pitiable than to see a person pretending to be a Catholic, yet his conduct is disgraceful to a pagan ! He professes Catholicism, but his religion is grasping greed, his appetite for strong drink, or some other passion which degrades noble human nature. Our earnest prayer should be that God may heal our souls, and that our hearts may burn with divine love, so that at the end of life He may say to each of us : *Thou liveth not in body, but in soul ; not for time, but for eternity with Me.*

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

But that servant falling down, besought him, saying : Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (St. Math. xviii.—26.)

My Dear Friends: Among the many useful lessons which the Gospel for to-day imparts, is contrition, or sorrow for sin. The poor servant is in a sad plight—His master demands a settlement. The account shows him to be in debt to the amount of 10,000 talents. An awful sum it is. He has not the means to liquidate such an enormous debt. So he falls prostrated before his master, beseeching him to show mercy to his servant. His supplication is not in vain. The good king has compassion, and forgives him all. But this servant has not the proper disposition for pardon. He is not possessed of a great-hearted generosity. No love for his master accentuates his motives, but fear of punishment makes him cringe ; for did he love the king, he would not have dared to abuse another servant of the same king. With cruel greed, he seizes his fellow-servant. There is no pity there; no heart to melt into tenderness ; but mercilessly he casts the poor debtor of 100 pence into prison. The fellow-servant's indebtedness was only a few dollars; his comrade's was 10,000 talents, or over \$15,000,000 of our money.

It is evident that this parable represents, in the per-

son of the king, Almighty God. His mercy is without limit. He is ever ready to pardon the sinner; but some conditions are required. Our benign Saviour gives us one in the continuation of this parable, when He describes the anger of the king and the condemnation of the unjust servant, saying: "*So shall My Heavenly Father do to you if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.*" Indeed, this seems a very reasonable requisite for pardon. Why should a human creature ask forgiveness, if he be unwilling to cancel the wrongs perpetrated upon him by another. Does God owe him any personal favors? Can he ask and receive, but in turn be narrow of heart and unforgiving? Thus it is, however, with man. He seems to have a mortgage on God's goodness; yet he is unmindful of the entreaties of his fellow-servants.

We may with unrestrained indignation condemn the unjust servant, consider him a flinty-hearted rascal; still, are we much better? How often, on our knees, in the presence of our Lord in the tabernacle, do we supplicate for mercy? But the very same day, perhaps the very same hour, we calumniate our neighbor. Do we mean to insult Almighty God by our conduct? Heaven forbid! Our prayer, nevertheless, contained not the true spirit of a contrite heart; or how could we be so unmindful of that disposition toward others, which God demands. It should be your earnest prayer that God may teach you to know yourselves and feel what others are. Were you conscious of all your own faults, you would not be so severe in judging others. Did you fully realize the immense debt that you owe God on account of sin, you would then be induced to shed tears of repentance. Your contrition would have all the requisites of true sorrow.

Sometimes a pang of remorse may disturb someone's conscience. Like the unjust servant, his sorrow may spring from dreaded punishment. But remorse is not contrition. A friend whom you have injured, dies. His last words were declarations of your worth. You had misjudged him. He was your friend. You had mistaken him for an enemy. You now know the truth, and the truth fills you with remorse. You deplore your rashness ; still there is no consideration for the offense given to God by your trespasses against your neighbor. The grief is not the contrition required in the Sacrament of Penance. Fear of the punishment of hell is sufficient for imperfect contrition. But how ignoble is such sorrow. God is sinned against. The Creator and Lord of heaven and earth has been insulted, yet the penitent regards not the majesty of the One offended, but selfishly considers his own loss. Can a Catholic be so forgetful of God's beneficence, so ungrateful to his greatest Benefactor, so blunt to every noble emotion, as not to implore first God's pardon with the most profound feelings of compunction ! The penalty may be terrible, but a magnanimous heart would certainly experience more pain from the thought that he had broken the chains of divine friendship than the punishment which his transgressions entail. A pious Catholic, if he has had the misfortune to commit sin, will first think of his ingratitude toward his Maker, his truest Friend.

The penitent must be sorry for all the mortal sins committed since his last worthy confession. Indeed, we may add, his venial sins, too. For any violation of heaven's law should awaken in the transgressor's heart the deepest sentiments of grief. Think of the Being offended and the one offending, and is not this rea-

son sufficient that we should bewail even the smallest sin, all the days of our life? Then ponder upon the mercy of God. All He asks is that the penitent will return and seek forgiveness with a humble and sorrowful heart. Ah! would many of us be so lenient toward those whose ungratefulness we have felt? Would you thus kindly and compassionately hold out so many loving inducements for a renewal of friendship? Would you go in quest of the ingrate as the Good Shepherd goes after the sheep which is lost? The unjust servant's debt was so great he could never pay it. This debt is nothing else only mortal sin. An eternity of punishment is the sentence. He prostrates himself and entreats his King to have pity upon him. What is the consequence? Not only patience is shown by the King, but He has compassion on the servant, and forgives all. Let us in our hearts kneel before the Sovereign Majesty of God and deplore all our sins—not only those committed since our last confession, but every sin of our lives. From the same fountain of feeling, let us supplicate God to be merciful toward us and obliterate all our transgressions.

There is no misfortune so great as that of sin. Troubles, trials, failures may strew our path with thorns and cause the heart to ache, but these are incomparable with sin. They are often for our good. Adversity purifies. From its gloomy mist arises blessings—blessings which train both the heart and intellect for grand achievement; which expand our view of things; which bring forth the purest feelings of sympathy from the deepest springs of the human heart. Not thus with sin. It poisons, where affliction only sweetens. It banishes God's grace from our heart. Trials are the milestones on the way to heaven. Sin diseases soul and body; mis-

fortunes well borne are the precious material from which heavenly crowns are fashioned. Sin is the only curse, the only calamity which degrades us. Sin robs us of God's friendship, and makes us rebels to heaven. It should, therefore, be detested more than all other afflictions of life. From these often come magnificent rewards ; from that, nothing except the anger of heaven. That the sinner has offended God, should be the only reason for his sorrow ; that he has brought upon himself condign punishment, ought to be of secondary consideration.

Contrition should not be only expressed by the lips,—nor is it necessary to manifest our sorrow by appearances ; but it is essential that our grief should come from the heart. If tears forbidden rise, they may be indicators of sorrow's pangs within. They are, however, dispensable. The keenest contrition has often no tears at all. A formal recital of words, commonly called an act of contrition, is not necessary. The heart of the penitent must feel the sorrow, and he must resolve to avoid sin in the future and the occasions thereof. The penitent, in the humility of his heart, regrets his fall ; is grieved because he was enticed by the alluring charms of sin from the Source of all good. He confesses his ingratitude toward heaven, and feels the low depths to which sin has dragged him. In sadness of heart he turns his eyes toward his Benefactor and prays : " O Lord ! have compassion on me. My debt is enormous. I can never repay You for the graces I have squandered ; but Your mercy is above Your works ! Pardon me, a sinner, Father, earnestly I implore ! " The shackles of sin fall from the poor penitent's soul. He is cleansed by the merits of his Saviour's passion and death. He is once more a child of heaven. Angels might well have

stood in awe while the priest pronounces the words of **ab-**solution and the penitent bows his head in silent sorrow. By this special power given by Our Lord to His Church, the sinner is again robed in the garment of innocence. And what was the sacrifice demanded from the transgressor in order that the merits of Jesus may be applied to his soul? Simply, go show yourself to the priest, and be sorry for your transgressions of My law. What wonderful rewards for so small a labor! Purity of heart and soul returns! The awful penalty to be imposed in eternity is obliterated!

How marvellous are the ways of God! What remedies he has prepared for frail human nature! Let us be thankful to Him that we are Catholics and have such extraordinary means of salvation. Every Catholic should daily ask God not to abandon him if he fall into the meshes of sin, but to give him the grace of repentance. Be not like the unjust servant spoken of in the Gospel of to-day, but show your appreciation of God's goodness by forgiving all others from your heart. By thus acting, God will have compassion on you during life; and when the soul stands trembling on the verge of eternity—when the last account is to be taken of every action of your lives, He will be merciful toward you, for you have shown mercy to others,—
“As you meted out, so it shall be meted unto you.”

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's (St. Math. xxii.—21.)

My Dear Friends : The Gospel just read relates, as you have observed, that the Pharisees sought to ensnare our Divine Lord in speech. For this purpose they send their disciples with some of the Herodians. These begin by flattery. Their intention is to draw forth a frank, independent answer from our Saviour. They imagine that in whatever way He will reply, He will involve Himself in a trap. Should He say that it was lawful to render tribute to Cæsar, then the Jews would clamor against Him ; for they maintain they were the chosen people of God, and therefore obliged to pay taxes to no foreign ruler. On the other hand, did He discountenance the paying of tribute to Cæsar, He would make Rome His enemy. In both cases He would give an opportunity to the Jews to incite the populace against Him. It is easily seen that it was not the love of their country which actuated them, but a desire to make Jesus a rebel in the eyes of the Herodians, or a traitor to Jewish traditions. Our Saviour knowing their thoughts, asks for a coin. "*Whose image is this ?*" He inquires. The answer was : "It is Cæsar's." They

thus admitted that he was their ruler. Then says Jesus : "*Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.*" Be just, He says to them, and give to everyone what is his, and do not allowed your malice and guile to have you forget that there is a God to whom you must render an account.

"*Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,*" implies that we should ever be steadfast in the support of our government ; that our allegiance should always be loyal, and that we should be faithful, obedient citizens. But while all this is legitimate, we must never forget the honor, obedience, and homage due the Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth. Often have soldiers died in the defense of their king's honor. They rejoiced in such a death. The presence of their king inspired them with the greatest bravery. To fall mortally wounded, while their king's eyes were upon them, was a glory for which they died. Who was this king, we may seek to know ? A man whose ambition or injustice compelled him to battle. Who had no regard for the lives of his brave soldiers only inasmuch as they would assist him in grasping the object of his ambitious desires or inflicting the venom of his wrath. If men will show such honor and obedience to an earthly ruler, what should be their willingness to honor Almighty God. He is a Father to all mankind. In return, He asks the love of affectionate children. Should we not be happy in the knowledge that we have such a father? He does not represent Himself as a tyrant ; but He is our most faithful Friend, our constant Benefactor, and our unchangeable Adviser. We should honor Him, in the first place, because He is God. His perfections, if we only reflect, must necessarily lead us to love and honor Him. You admire a beautiful summer morning. The glorious sun-

set illumining hill and vale ; the balmy, cooling atmosphere of the evening also elicit your admiration. The enrapturing offsprings of genius—the statue and the painting, draw forth the expressions, “ How lovely ! How magnificent ! What a grand conception ! ” Rational beings love one another on account of friendship, affection, or kindness. But all the perfections of man and Nature have their source in God. He is the Author of every noble, human attribute, whether of mind or body. The star-decked heavens, with all their splendors, are the work of Omnipotence. Everything of beauty and awe, everything of power and wisdom, everything small and great, owe to Him their origin and perfection. For as St. Paul says : “ What have we that we did not receive ? ” Is not this perfect Being, the Architect and Builder of the universe, deserving of the homage and love of His creatures ? If our hearts and souls are drawn irresistibly to the idols of human perfection, how our whole being should be centred and live in the God of all perfection. If the beauties of night and the glories of day expand the heart with emotion, how the soul should well forth in the loftiest praise to the Creator of all this munificence. If you appreciate power, behold Almighty God calling forth the universe from the abyss of nothing. If you admire wisdom, ponder upon the tremendous volume of the stars, their nice adjustment, their accurate movements. Do you esteem justice—that impartial attribute so difficult to discover in the judges of this world—then honor the God of justice, Who will render to every one according to his works. Do you love the merciful and the good, then turn your eyes, brimming with love and thanksgiving, to the Giver of all, and in your prayer of love remember the Saviour crucified for you.

These are some reasons why we should revere God. To these we may add this first and most solemn Commandment to Moses and all posterity thereafter : “ *I am the Lord Thy God, thou shalt have no strange gods before Me, etc.*” In His injunction to Adam and Eve, He demanded obedience : *You shall not eat of that tree.* On Mount Sinai He formulated a more explicit command : “ *I am the Lord thy God. To Me and to Me only do you owe adoration. You shall not make a graven thing nor the likeness of any thing that is in the Heavens above or in the water under the earth. You shall not adore them nor serve them. Thou shall not make wealth your God. Thou shalt not fall down before the idol of your ambition. Thou shalt adore neither lust, nor avarice, nor fame, nor distinction ; Me only shalt thou adore and serve.*”

A deliberate violation of this command brings upon the transgressor an awful punishment. He dares to defy heaven. He spurns the perfections of the All-powerful One. He is ungrateful for the mercies shown him and the blessings showered upon him. He adores and serves false gods, incurring thereby the lamentable consequences. Although the heavens and the earth proclaim the glories of God, man sometimes fails to unite his praises with those of inanimate nature. He perceives not that his discordance injures no person except himself ; for man attains his highest development by serving his Creator. Such service makes him a true nobleman. It is a shield against dishonor or disgrace. Being God’s friend, he cannot be a slave to the caprices of his passions or the passions of others. He disdains the mean and the sordid. Virtue protects the purity of his heart, while it enlightens and directs his intellect. The commandments of God are so many guardian angels

preserving him in the performance of his labors. He shrinks from doing an injury to his enemy, and esteems his manhood more than gold, office, or power. This service endows his character with the noblest attributes of man. Be he poor or rich, influential or otherwise, he is happier and more successful for his fidelity to his God. "Be true to yourself," says Shakespeare, "and it follows as night the day, you cannot do wrong to anyone." But a person is only true to himself when he is true to his God. While he is true to God, it is as sure as the sun rose this morning, that he cannot do an act of injustice to any person. Yea, more; he is a benefactor of the human race so far as he is able. Should he be influential, his achievements will be notable for their honesty and brilliancy. They will merit and receive the approbation of his fellow-men, because they have been approved by heaven. His days on earth will be blessed, and he will be remembered for his justice, charity, and other Godlike deeds.

You need not be told more to convince you that it is profitable for you to render to God the things that are His. But as an incentive to greater effort, study the man's conduct who refuses to honor and serve his Divine Master. He may be shrewd. He may be a money-maker. He may obtain some popularity; but it is the popularity which coxcombs give for their own benefit. He expires without honor, and the world is worse instead of better for his living. Where is the unfortunate outcast whom he has befriended? Where is the orphan whose tears he has transformed to joys? Oh! he had no time for such. But were we to ask, where are the ones he has wronged and ruined, a voice may say, their cries have risen to Me for vengeance. He has not been true to himself, nor to God, nor to anyone

else. He has strained every nerve to ascend to the summit of his ambition. His ladder is built from the wreck which he caused. He reaches his goal, grasps the glittering object when he feels the Angel of Death. What has he gained? The curses of the poor, the hungry, and the wronged, are the requiems chanted for his departing soul. What has he earned by his disobedience to God? A restless, feverish life, a miserable death.

Which course will you pursue? The one, which brings maledictions upon your head; or the other, which crowns you on earth with the gratitude of your fellow-men, and in eternity with the reward of your honorable labors? The choice lies before you. It is for you to choose. The one will bestow blessings here and rewards hereafter; the other affords nothing but torments in time and in eternity. Render then to God what belongs to Him. In order that you may better do this, He promises an endless reward. Cæsar may bestow some compensation for your loyalty to him; still, should you be thus favored, remember, the pension he gives is transitory. Again bear in mind there is no incompatibility between the honor due to God and that owed to Cæsar. By preserving your allegiance to the latter, intact, you also do the work of the King of kings. But if we serve our ruler only for the remunerations given, we certainly act an ignoble part. Do you love your country more than you do your lives, you are patriots deserving the veneration of every loyal people. Yet here it must be admitted that your fidelity to God is of incomparably more importance to you. You must be patriotic citizens, if you serve God; but you may be faithful to your country and be infidels to God. The honor and glory due to

God transcend every act of respect shown to temporal rulers as much as the Former is superior to the latter. Rulers may forget your service. In the hour of misfortune, they may despise you. It is well, therefore, to cherish the words which Shakespeare puts in the mouth of Woolsey : " Had I served my God with one-half the zeal I have served my king, He would not in my old age have left me naked to my enemies."

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

And they laugh at Him. (St. Math. ix.—24.)

My Dear Friends: Among the many things which the Gospel for this Sunday imparts, is a useful lesson to the scoffer. The same cause which induced the crowd to laugh at our Divine Lord, still exists. What is it? The answer is apparent. Ignorance is its cause. Persons not understanding the nature of some phenomena will scoff at the idea of anybody attempting an explanation of them; or, if what transpires in their presence is not pleasing to their whimsical taste, it is ridiculed. Nor is the scoffer a development of modern times. You have already observed that he made himself conspicuous about two thousand years ago, when Jesus went to the Ruler's house. Of course they knew that the girl was dead, and for anyone to say she only slept, was to them senseless. Their ignorance, however, was in fault. They knew not the Divine Person Who stood in their midst.

The Holy Scriptures, in speaking of the dead, often say they are only sleeping—sleeping until the resurrection day, when all will be recalled to life. Although the girl was dead in the ordinary acceptance of the term, she was not absolutely dead so that she could not be restored to life by divine power, as St. Jerome and

other commentators remark. And in her case as in that of all those who have been summoned to return to the living, the sentence passed immediately after death was suspended. This was an opportunity for Jesus to prove His divinity. The death of the Ruler's daughter was a means of promulgating the doctrine and power of Christ,—“ *the fame hereof went abroad into all that country* ”; and her restoration to life is a stinging rebuke to all scoffers.

You have, no doubt, observed how some gibbers ridicule the defects of others ; or what they, in their smartness, consider defects. They laugh at others, and amuse their friends and themselves by mimicking what their fastidious judgment espies. They can, as Dryden says,

“ The walk, the words, the gestures, could supply,
The habit mimic and the mien belie.”

If a person's nose is not just according to their notion, they must find fault and ridicule. If the mouth has not the proportions which their acute idea of beauty demands, the possessor suffers jibes at their discretion. If the eyes are not orbs of brilliancy and perfection, woe be to the poor unfortunate if he come under the lash of their tongues. If the young or aged have some defect in gait or speech, these connoisseurs must scoff, ridicule, and laugh. They are idlers who waste the precious time given them by Almighty God, in descrying the imperfections of their neighbors. They are usually a worthless set of scoffers who consider their judgments perfect and their persons without fault. Themselves and their listless, lazy mode of living are the best censures which can be administered to them. The most curious part of the whole affair is that they seldom note their own defects. It is strange,

very strange, that we should have any scoffer ; for of all persons, the scoffer is the most exposed to derision. You never saw an intelligent well-formed man or woman ridicule anyone. A wise person would not do it, because wisdom and ignorance are antagonistic, and ignorance is the mother of scoffing, derision, and the like.

It requires not the eye of a sage to detect scorn in the language of those whose ignorance did not allow them to see what distinguished inventors and discoverers at once saw and understood. When Columbus introduced his geographical faith among unbelievers, he met with scorn and derision. The scoffer called him an imaginative being—one demented, a visionary adventurer. Any theory or plan colliding with that of the scoffer's must consequently be insane, foolish, and chimerical. But what was the cause ? Ignorance ; ignorant conceit prevented them from giving any topic its due consideration. The renowned discoverer bade the New World to arise from its death-like sleep into new life, and gave it to mankind in all the health and richness of her pristine glory. He was the seer and not the scoffer. Mankind will ever remember him with undiminished gratitude. Centuries before, when Bacon, the monk, made his great inventions, shallow-hearted men not only refrained from praise, but snarled at the productions of genius. Centuries after the great navigator, Galileo, was laughed at because he dared to maintain the theory of the motions of the earth. His critics had more derision than brains. Posterity, with grateful remembrance, applauds him and the friends who assisted him with money, as well as encouraged him by their fidelity.

When the Colonists argued they should not be taxed without representation in British Parliament, they were

not only derided by their enemies, but were called rebels. Jeers were to be enforced by the cannon's mouth. Scorn and ridicule were belched forth at the poor, suppliant British subjects on this side of the Atlantic. England inflamed by her own ignorance, foresaw not the terrible retribution she was preparing for herself. The threatening clouds of war burst, drenching Great Britain with the gory results of her own ignorance. Neither jeer nor scorn, neither the scoffer nor eight years of bloody struggle, was sufficient to conquer a people who understood their rights and determined to maintain them. From the scoffing multitude arose a free country.

While the scoffer is seen in every field of human endeavor, it is in affairs of religion he appears most conspicuous. Of course he knows everything. Being thus qualified, he is as capable to assign a man a creed as he is ready to disdain a man who may have the honesty to differ with him. The Presbyterian derides the Methodist; the Methodist the Presbyterian. The Baptist ridicules both; and these in concert with all other denominations, rail at the Catholic Church. The reason, you ask? Again my answer is, ignorance is the cause. To be sure, our Protestant friends know more about the Catholic religion than Catholics know. Catholics are a lamentable set of benighted fools. Our friends, in the broad sympathy of their hearts, pity us down-trodden, superstitious, idolatrous subjects of Rome. The abominations of the confessional are clearly understood by them. The Sacrifice of the Altar is condemned as barbarous. The crafty priest is at last placed under the glare of their search-light and all his wickedness exposed. Is it not sad that people should be thus so stupified by ignorance as to make such assertions?

Why do they not study our religion from our standpoint? Why be misled while they imagine themselves so wise? Disrobe yourselves, we say to those, from all prejudice and bigotry. Give the subject the honest examination it deserves, and your derision will be converted into praise for the old Church.

Protestants, as a class, are fair-minded, candid, impartial in the things which they understand. It is in religious matters they make grave mistakes. Did they know better, they would shrink from doing so much injustice to the Catholic religion. When you speak with some of them, as we have done, you will discover their longing to learn more of Catholics and the Catholic religion. The frank, honest manner in which they will tell you they knew not better, will win your confidence as well as your admiration. There will be no quibble in their acknowledgment of ignorance. The A. P. A. (American Protective Association so called) and the Junior Order of American Mechanics are composed of fanatics who should not be numbered among respectable, broad-souled Protestants. But even these associations banded together to injure their fellow-men, are due to ignorance. In the oath taken by them, they solemnly swear in the presence of their God, to do all in their power to prevent the election of a Catholic. Yea, more; the oath obliges them to oppose everyone who is kindly disposed toward Catholics, and never to employ a Catholic in any business if any other person can be found to fill the position. The avowed purpose of these despicable organizations is to ostracize Catholics from the social, political, and commercial world. They would have us understand, they are patriotic. Yet their conduct is neither patriotic nor honest, nor according to the spirit of our Constitution. Such patriotism is

tyranny ; such fidelity to the laws of our country is rebellion ; such abolition of equitable principles is destructive to enterprise, retards progress, begets religious rancor, and is inconsistent with the supreme law, whose Author is God.

Now, while we condemn the scoffer, we ought to be careful to avoid becoming such ourselves. A Catholic should entertain views broad and honorable. While he pardons the ignorance of others, he must be careful not to indulge in the very same defects. But how often are some Catholics lacking in the high-minded, noble-souled principles which they admire in others. How many a Catholic sets a pernicious example not only to Protestants, but also to other Catholics. He, too, scoffs at things he does not comprehend. If we consider prejudice or bigotry offensive in others, let us dissipate the same from our own hearts. To be Catholics we ought to be synonymous with everything pure and impartial. Still Catholics will stoop to do the meanest of acts. Regardless of everything sacred, he will sometimes promise, and in the very act of promising will intend to do the contrary. He will attend Mass, and the very same day, perhaps, the very same hour, injure or try to injure his neighbor. His own selfish greed will drive him to engage in transactions of which any honest man would be ashamed. Have you not seen such Catholics ? But you know that religion is not the cause. No, no ; it is ignorance. And these will ridicule a Catholic living in accordance with the divine precepts of his Church. In their own conceits they think they are smart, but they mistake ignorance for ability. A malicious liar or a scoffer you should spurn as a monstrosity of human nature. Keep away from his company ; he is a degraded mass of human corruption. Teach him

that you despise his low, cunning, and debased character. By so doing, your conduct will not be unchristian, because he will learn thereby that his duplicity is contemptible and his scoffing disgraceful.

Much of the reproach heaped upon the Church is the result of Catholics without principle and without charity. In all the affairs of life, our ambition must be to excel in what is good and virtuous, if we would dispel the clouds of prejudice hanging around us. Let us learn this lesson from the Gospel : never to despise anyone, not to deride where we do not understand ; not to laugh at the lowly ; but to stand upon the unchangeable foundations of charity to all men. Sincere we should be in our convictions and faithful in their performance. Then you will be pleasing to your heavenly Father, and in the last moments of your life He will extend the paternal hand of His affections to you. You shall rise not to renewed temporal life, but to that life which is everlasting.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.
(St. Math. xxiv.—30.)

My Dear Friends: The General Judgment will be an event of awful import to the human race. Any trial is troublesome. When you have a lawsuit, you are anxious for a decision favorable to yourselves. You make every preparation, you leave nothing undone which may jeopardize your cause. On the day of trial you are feverish with anxiety and excitement, lest the case may be declared against you. But in the last trial, during which the Son of God will sit in judgment, there are involved decisions of the greatest importance. Whether you consider the vast number of persons concerned, the appalling consequences, or the eternal reward, you cannot find anything comparable to the General Judgment. Upon that decision depends everlasting misery, or endless happiness; ceaseless tears, or incessant joys; a life with Jesus forever, or a continuous privation of the presence of God. A skeptic may say: "Oh, this idea of a General Judgment is all bosh. I don't believe anything of the kind. Time and again people have deceived themselves about this same topic. They imagined the end of the world near at hand. Some prophesied the day, but it came not. Away with the notion!"

You must not, my Christian friends, overlook the fact that the Son of God has foretold the Judgment, and He says in this very chapter: "*The heavens and the earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.*" Which shall you believe ; upon which will you rely—our Saviour, or a scoffer? Moreover, while Noe was building the ark according to the command of God, undoubtedly people were amazed at his work, and thought him foolish for constructing such a huge refuge from temporal dangers. They must have laughed at the notion. The whole earth to be destroyed, together with every living thing, except this insane builder and his family and the animals sheltered in the ark. This vast building to float on the waters, to rise above the highest mountains. Why, where would all this water come from? Such, my dear friends, we may suppose were the remarks made by the unbelievers in the days of Noe. Indeed, the remarks upon this occasion were probably more rash and foolish than anything we could imagine. But the flood came as God had predicted, and the wicked were consumed in the angry waters. Thus also the General Judgment will come, although many may consider it a myth. As sure as you and I are here to-night, we shall stand in the presence of the Son of God to receive the sentence of condemnation, or the reward of heaven. And what an awful spectacle of black despair and of sublime glory will commingle in that scene.

The angels of the Lord will go forth with a great trumpet to summon the elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. What a stupendous gathering of people shall be there! How various in form, how different in soul ! All the great ones of the earth—the kings and rulers of every age and nation, the scholar of every clime,

pope and priest, rich and poor, all will there be collected. For what? For judgment! The monarch at whose beck millions bowed, will be present. But where is the blaze of royalty? He is alone. No richly decorated retinue attends him. The crown and the throne are absent. His will was mighty. He was a god on earth; but there he stands as humbled as the humblest. The beggar is as great as he, perhaps greater; for all that elevates a person then are his good works. His head is not bedecked with the diadem, but visible upon his brow are all the acts of tyranny, debauchery, and cruelty of his infamous reign. The rights of his subjects were considered as naught. He spoke, and they trembled; he rebuked, and they suffered imprisonment or death. He fancied there was none so great as he; but now behold him, shorn of his pomp and power! How low, how disregarded! In the presence of his God, he sinks into insignificance. His condition is shared by all those who were mighty or ruled, but who abused their power or governed with haughtiness and injustice.

In that vast throng, where are the cruel wealthy arrayed? You would not know them were it not for all the sins of which opulence was the cause. The wail of the orphan and the widow and the wronged rises to the Throne of Justice against them. How many burning tears they have caused to be shed! How many have they oppressed? Wealth was might, and might was right. But the curses which an outraged people heaped upon them, were heard by the Avenger of the weak and the lowly. Where now is their power, where their riches, where their pride and ostentation? All have perished. They are unattended. They learn that God alone is great.

Assembled for judgment are parents who hurl maledictions upon the heads of their offspring. It was he who worked his father's or mother's ruin. The child in turn utters imprecations against the parent. Ah! had my parents trained me to habits of virtue; had they kept me from bad company; had they taught me to pray; had they led me on the path to heaven,—I would not now be seen on the way to hell. The husband will curse the wife, and the wife the husband; for they have been each others spiritual ruin. But, oh, the awful thought! What will be the punishment for those who have murdered their unborn offspring? who were cruel enough to destroy life with a mother's hand? A mother who should die for her child; a mother, the ideal of affection, heartlessly besmearing her hand with the blood of the helpless, is an appalling thought.

In that numberless assembly will be those who will crave for vengeance to be inflicted upon the heads of monsters of impurity, who doomed them to a life of shame on earth, and effected the eternal damnation of their souls. Pure she was and innocent when first he seduced her to sin. Her aspirations were lofty. The future was promising. The smiles of health and beauty were on her countenance; on her brow, sincerity, modesty, and honor. Life was budding into summer—a summer of happiness, peace, and innocence. But, alas! from all this she turned away, to listen to the flattery of him who meditated her ruin. She fell; perhaps rose again, only to sink deeper into the meshes of impurity; she had broken away from the anchor of innocence. There was soon no restraint. In turn, she allured others into sin. Thousands were destroyed by her fall, and now she invokes maledictions upon her malicious destroyer. She sees how much is lost and nothing gained, save

that she will continue during eternity to curse the scoundrel whose bewitching tongue and bland smiles robbed her of peace and effected her wretchedness. She thought him honorable. He had a suave demeanor. It was the subtlety of the serpent. He gloried in his conquest. Among his associates he boasted of his damnable deeds. He was not one who had struggled with temptations, fought them back, prayed in order to conquer ; or in an unprotected moment fell a victim to allurements of mighty temptations. No ; his ambition was to pollute purity ; his greatest glory, the destruction of others.

But on the other hand is the young man who was ensnared by a false woman's charms. He was a noble youth, ignorant of the infernal way of the bad. The pride of his parents and his friends, his every motive was stamped with the seal of honor and manliness. The emotions of the heart stimulated to high resolve. He was ambitious ; but his ambition was worthy of a great-minded, noble-hearted young man. Fortune caressed him ; a bright future beckoned him on. But there he stands now a picture of despair and remorse. He had magnificent talents, but he abused them. His soul was once spotless, but now it is tarnished with the foulness of crime. Dejected and alone he stands. Misery has claimed him for her own. He knows his fate, and bitterly laments his awful misfortune.

Around about him is a hideous group. Drunkards who died in their sins. Cursing God they breathed their last breath ; nor have they ceased to blaspheme His holy name. There is the murderer with his dagger reeking with the blood of his helpless victim. It was an instrument of destruction, now it is a witness of His horrible crime. His victim is in his presence. The

death wound pleads with irresistible eloquence for justice. With more than human power it tells of the fatal blow. How he prayed for pity and for life, but both were denied him. He was cut off in his sin. Now he is damned, and torture gives vehemence to his appeals. How can the murderer expect mercy? He gave none. His victim's doom is sealed. Can he expect pardon, who deprived a human being of life and despoiled him of the opportunities of repentance and salvation.

All, however, are not bad who are gathered there. The saints and martyrs and all those who lived a pious life, rejoice in the happiness to be possessed for eternity. The martyrs' wounds are now their glory. These are proofs of noble lives and heroic deaths ; all the virtuous are overjoyed. Their suffering on earth is now considered nothing. Their trials and sufferings and anguish are to be rewarded with an endless life with their Creator. The palm of victory is theirs, and the crown of immortality is the compensation for their tireless efforts in the service of God. It is beyond my power to describe to you the heavenly enthusiasm with which they will be filled upon that occasion. But it is important for us to ponder well the consequences of this last trial, as the interests of all the human race are involved, and ask ourselves : On what side shall we be after the irrevocable decree goes forth ? We shall surely be present, but what will be the sentence ? Will it be : *Come forth, ye blessed of My Father ; or, Depart, ye cursed ones ?*

While all are awaiting the close of the final act in the great drama of human existence, the sun grows pale, the moon is darkened, the stars fall from the heavens, and all Nature seems convulsed at the over-awing scene to be enacted. In the midst of this con-

sternation the Son of God appears with great power and majesty. Not weak and haggard as He was on Calvary, but surrounded with all the glory of heaven. The good will move to welcome Him Who is the source of all their joy, and for Whom they bore all wrongs, insults, and even death, with remarkable fortitude. The very damned will admit His goodness and love for the human race. Their greatest torture will be the consciousness of the loss of One Who had an infinite attachment for all mankind. They will acknowledge their damnation is to be attributed to none but themselves ; and will curse themselves on account of their ingratitude toward the fountain of all mercy and charity.

As the Saviour of mankind looks out upon that immense concourse of people, and sees so many who have blasphemed against Him, who have wronged themselves and others ; in a word, as He beholds all who have violated His laws and spurned His mercies, He pronounces the sentence of endless joy and everlasting sorrow. The cause of this joy or this despair is largely due to our own conduct. It is ourselves who compel Him, according to justice, an attribute of His nature, to declare us guilty, if guilty we be. And on that solemn occasion we shall, no doubt, understand this better than we do now, although now we are not ignorant of the fact that God cannot save us without our own co-operation. Let us strive then to follow Jesus faithfully through life, that on the Last Day we may have the inexpressible pleasure of following Him to His eternal mansion. Let us, too, invoke the prayers of Mary, that she may lift us when we fall, and by her prayers be assisted in obtaining those eternal joys for which we were created.

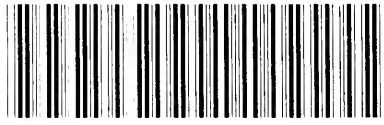
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